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MICROFILMED

Hindu Philosopher.

THE
HINDU
PHILOSOPHER

1. The first part of the paper is devoted to the study of the properties of the function $f(x)$ defined by the equation

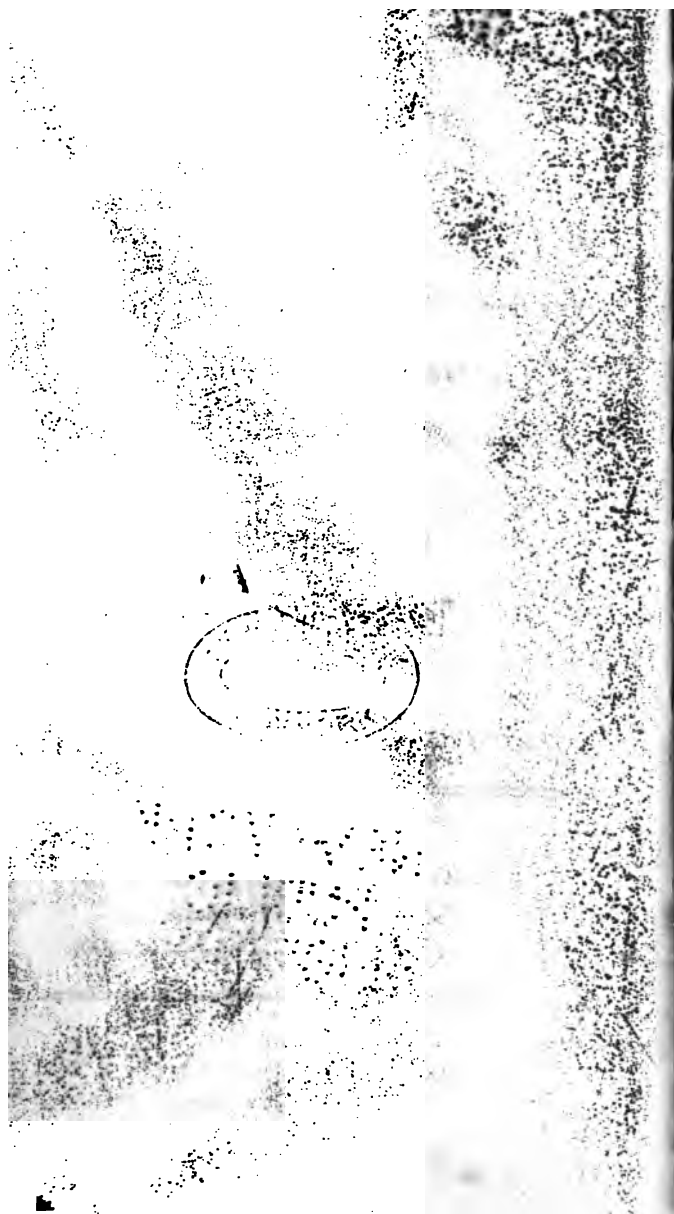
LETTERS
OF
SHAH COOLEN,
A
HINDU PHILOSOPHER,
RESIDING IN
PHILADELPHIA;
TO HIS FRIEND
EL HASSAN,
AN INHABITANT OF
DELHI.



BOSTON,
PRINTED BY RUSSELL AND CUTLER.
(PROPRIETORS OF THE WORK.)

1802.

checked
May 1913



TO
THE HON. John Quincy Adams, ESQUIRE,
WHOSE
ATTAINMENTS AS A SCHOLAR,
AND
INTELLIGENCE AS A STATESMAN AND CIVILIAN,
HAVE
DESERVEDLY RANKED HIM AMONG THE
FIRST POLITICAL
AND
LITERARY CHARACTERS
OF
AMERICA ;
THIS VOLUME,
CONTAINING PURE MORALS, CORRECT POLITICS,
AND ELEGANT LITERATURE,
IS RESPECTFULLY
Dedicated,
As a Testimony of the Admiration and Esteem of his
Obedient Servants,
THE PUBLISHERS.

ADVERTISEMENT OF THE PUBLISHERS.

THE Letters, which compose this Volume, were originally published in the New-York "*Commercial Advertiser*;" and appear to have been the leisure-hour lucubrations of some ingenious correspondent of that well edited paper. A few of the first numbers, having been republished in this place, several literary Gentlemen suggested to the Editors the propriety of collecting and publishing in a volume this valuable specimen of American Literature. With this view, they addressed a letter to the anonymous author of the Letters of SHAHCOOLEN, requesting his permission for their publication. To this, with diffidence, he consented, and immediately forwarded, after a hasty revision, a regular file of all, that at present he intended to publish. Of their literary excellence, the public may now form an opinion. It is therefore unnecessary to enter on a critical discussion of their merits. The sentiments however, which they inculcate, both moral and political, are certainly of the purest tendency; and are calculated to correct the philosophical reveries of the present day, and to display to posterity some of the leading traits in the manners and principles of the Eighteenth Century. In the character of a Native of *Hindustan*, it was necessary to adopt the Eastern manner of composition. Comparing them with the few specimens of Oriental Literature, we have seen, the Author has been happy in his imitation. The style of those Eastern writers may appear too florid and glowing to a corrected taste of more northern climes. Enjoying a milder atmosphere, their feelings and imaginations are more warm and vivid, their language and mode of expression will of course be more brilliant, and be ornamented with a greater variety of metaphorical allusion. The Author of these letters, however, has preserved the leading features of their style, without following them in their excursions of wild similitude and extravagant hyperbole. This manner of writing has already been successfully attempted by the most distinguished among the *English*, *German*, and *French* writers, and those who have read, and admired the *Gittens of the World*, or the *Persian Letters*, will not be displeased with those of SHAHCOOLEN.

THE Author, although he has for the present suspended his literary lucubrations, possessed of health and leisure, will probably again, resume his speculations and fulfill the promises already made in some of these letters; and the Editors may possibly have it in their power to present the public with a second volume.

PREFACE.

THE Letters which are presented to the publick, in this little Volume, were never designed, by the writer, for any other than a newspaper existence.

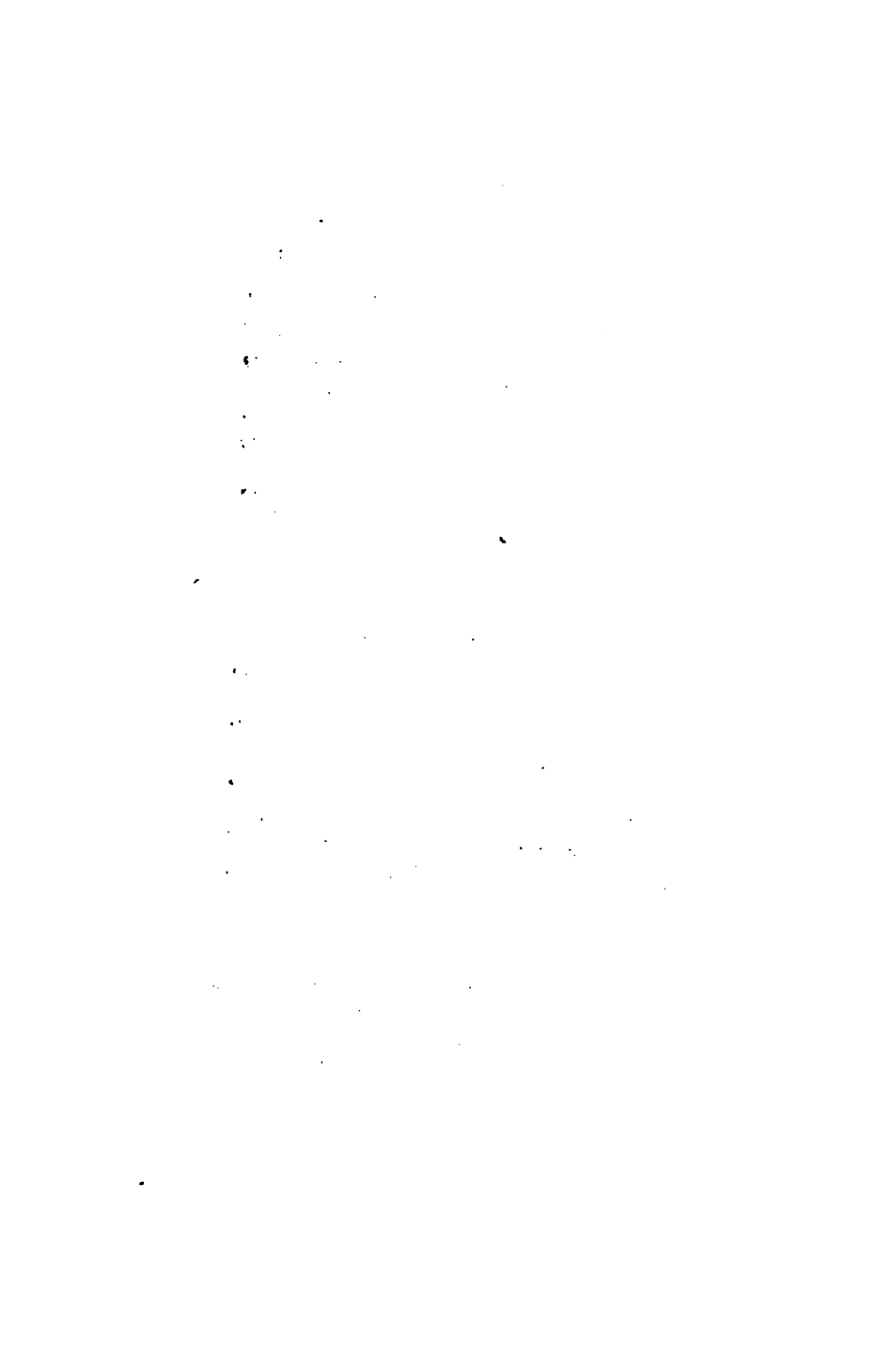
IT was therefore expected, that they would slide into oblivion, along with the other *ephemeral* productions, which constantly issue from the presses of our Country.

FULLY impressed with this idea, the author gave way to that *easy negligence*, which is admissible in fugitive pieces, but ought never to be indulged by a writer, who presents himself at the bar of Criticism, and challenges the applause of posterity.

FINDING that a plan was already matured, at Boston, to give these letters the more durable form of a Volume, the author has corrected such errors as presented themselves upon a second perusal ; and since he could not prevent the intended publication, he has attempted to save the Criticks as much trouble as possible.

STILL he is sensible, that imperfect health, numerous avocations, and a hasty review, may have left many errors undetected.

FOR these, his only apology is, that the trifling productions which compose this little book, would never have claimed a place upon the Bookseller's shelf, had not the sentiments of the publishers been more favorable to them, than his own.



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SHAHCOOLEN.

Letter First.

DEARLY BELOVED EL HASSAN,

THOU knowest how, breaking through that custom of my country, which confines the HINDU* to his native soil, and yielding to my ruling passion, the love of knowledge, I left the delightful fields of AGRA, where fragrance floats in every breeze, and beauty glows in every prospect, and steered my course to the British Isles.—Thou knowest, how I explored every European region, from rocky and inhospitable Norway, to the luxuriant plains of Sicily; noting in my progress, the various shades of character and manners, and transmitting thee, from time to time, the story of my travels.

* There is no inconsistency in the supposition that a *Hindu Philosopher* has left his country for a season. It is indeed the policy of the Hindu religion, government and manners, to bind the people to their country; but a man of an enlightened and enterprising mind may easily be supposed to break through such a custom in pursuit of knowledge.

PURSUING still the favourite object of my life, I am now fixed for a season, in this great city, the emporium of this western world.

THOU rememberest that I told thee of a new sect of Philosophers, lately arisen in Europe, who profess to teach mankind, in a mode entirely new, the way to virtue, and to happiness. The established laws, religion, manners and maxims of their country they condemn; and teach, that man, by nature perfect, needs but to follow nature's impulse; and *his own* energies will carry him to virtue and to glory.

THIS new Philosophy has spread, in a greater or less degree, over the whole of civilized Europe, and it is *inculcated*, and believed by multitudes in America.

TO a Hindu, who has been taught from his cradle, to believe implicitly the holy BRAMINS, to copy the manners of his ancestors, and to venerate the religion of the great BRUMMA, such doctrines appear impious and horrible.

BUT thou must not think, that I am in a country like Hindustan.

HERE the God of the land, whom they call JEHOVAH ; his son and the partner of his throne, JESUS CHRIST, *the* SAVIOUR ; and a third person of the Godhead, *the* SANCTIFIER ; thus resembling the three great emanations of the divine Brumma, are every day insulted and blasphemed. Their holy VEDA and SHAHSTAH, denominated the BIBLE, are not only opposed by argument, but made the subject of standing ridicule ; they are quoted and alluded to, *in the expression* of their most lewd and profane conceptions ; and many, affecting a peculiar brilliancy of wit, repeat, with the most blasphemous levity, such passages of these sacred books, as appear, even to my mind, replete with holy grandeur.

THE Bramins or Priests, whom we in Hindustan venerate and love, whose persons and employment we believe too sacred to be made the theme of familiar discourse, are here loaded with obloquy

and contempt, charged with such nefarious designs, as are imputed by us, only to the despised vagabonds of the CAST of *Harri*.

THE pagodas or temples, in which *we* place the image of the great *Brumma*, of *Vavafwata*, of *Mahadeva*, and of the other Gods, into which we never enter without ablution, and from which we never depart without prostrate devotion, are here thrown open upon common and profane occasions. In them they assemble to debate concerning their public affairs; to elect their Rajahs and Sultans; and sometimes, to exhibit a strange kind of performance, called a comedy or tragedy, in which the scenes of real life are professedly exhibited, persons and manners are ridiculed, blood is shed, and war waged in jest.

THOU knowest that a Hindu never speaks of his Sultan, but with the most reverential respect; his character he always defends; his mandates he ever obeys; and his death he sincerely de-

plores. The Sultan is considered, by the Hindu, as the head, the prince and the father of his people ; and to enable him to promote his people's welfare, their lives, their talents and their fortunes are placed entirely at his disposal. His glory is their glory, and his prosperity their happiness.

BUT in this country the Sultan is the *servant of the people*. By them, his merits are freely discussed, his failings magnified, and his virtues diminished ; he is the jest of every vulgar tongue ; his measures are examined, censured and opposed ; and, as he is indebted to the people for his elevation, so he depends upon them for the existence of his dignity ; and therefore, descends from his precarious throne, whenever *his sovereigns, the people*, see fit to direct.

I AM told that the state of things which I have described, is imputed in part, to the influence of the new philosophy. It is the spirit of this philosophy to reduce all things to one common level ; to pull down the Gods from their thrones, and

to trample the kings of the earth in the dust. It interferes in every concern of public, and of private life; and aims at a total change in every department of society.

A SYSTEM of philosophy so singular, and which has already produced very extensive and fatal effects, cannot be uninteresting to a philosopher.

I SHALL therefore, my dear El Haffan, endeavour to trace the operations of this new philosophy, upon the affairs of this western world; and shall not fail to communicate my discoveries, connected with such other interesting remarks, as have probably never reached the walls of DELHI, nor employed before, the contemplations of a *Hindu Philosopher*.

THOU, who inhabitest a country, whose laws, customs and ideas, are immutably fixed, wilt learn with astonishment, that no custom is here so sacred, and no doctrine so venerable, as to be secure against the innovations of the new philosophy.

For a number of years it has filled the finest countries of Europe with desolation and carnage ; and those regions ; which it has not ravaged, have been rent asunder by factions ; every man has taken his side, and, not unfrequently, members of the same family, and partners of the same house, are seen in opposite ranks.

THE latter part of this description is applicable to America. Even here, the most distant regions of the empire, although equally remote from each other, as the mountains of *Kuttner* from the mouths of the *Ganges*, are hailing, with the most extravagant exultation, the first dawns of the new illumination.

THE new philosophy is the ruling topic of discussion ; it is perpetually contested and advocated, by the learned and the great ; while the lowest classes of society, of the same degree as those in Hindustan of the casts of *Sudder* and *Harri*, implicitly believe the dogmas, which they are taught.

NOT the music of NARED, should he

tune to sweetest harmony his heavenly lyre, nor the melodious numbers of the sisters Gopia, singing, by moon-light, in the fragrant groves of the sacred mountain *Goverdhan*, would be able to allure a *modern Philosopher* from these bewildering speculations. May the almighty Brumma illuminate the mind of my dear El Haffan, and preserve him till he shall again receive the embraces of his faithful.

SHAHCOOLEN.



 Letter Second.

BELOVED EL HASSAN,

FALSE philosophy, striving to impress upon mankind the conviction, that it soars above common pleasures, and common ideas, has ever affected to despise and to degrade that sex, which the great BRUMMA has given us to alleviate, by their delightful tenderness, all the pains, and to animate all the joys of this life. Knowing, as thou dost, my warm partiality for this loveliest, best part of creation, thou canst not be surprised, that in all the countries through which I have passed, their happiness has been among the earliest subjects of my investigation.

KNOW then, that a total renovation of the female character, and a destination in society, totally new, is one grand object contemplated by that new philosophy, of which, in my last epistle, I gave some small account.

LETTERS OF

MARY Woolstonecraft, a female philosopher of the *new school*, has written, within these few years past, a book, which she named "*A vindication of the Rights of Woman*;" composed, for the express purpose of rousing her sex from their inglorious repose, and of stimulating them to a vigorous exertion of their native *energies*.

SHE discards all that sexual tenderness, delicacy and modesty, which constitute the female loveliness; boldly pronounces them equal to the rougher sex in every thing but bodily strength; and even imputes their deficiency, in this particular, principally to a falsely refined education. She asserts that a husband is a *paltry* bauble, compared with *the attainments of reason*; that the female should be subject, or superior to the male, just in proportion to those attainments; and that the want of them constitutes the only obligation for the submission of the wife to the husband. This female philosopher indigantly rejects the idea of a sex in the soul, pronouncing the sensibility, timidity and

SHAHCOOLEN.

tendernefs of women, to be merely artificial refinements of character, introduced and foftered by men, to render fenfual pleafure more voluptuous. She indeed profefles a high regard for chaftity ; but unfortunately the praftice of her life was at war with her precepts. She admitted one *ſentimental lover* after another, to the full fruition of her charms, and proved the *attainments* of *reaſon*, to be, in her view, fources of pleafure, far inferior, in value, to the pleafures of ſenſe.

IN ſhort, polluted as ſhe was by the *laſt crime* of woman, MARY ſtepped forth as the champion and reformer of her ſex ; ſhe wiſhed to ſtrip them of every thing feminine, and to affimilate them, as faſt as poſſible, to the maſculine character.

O, MY dear El Haſſan, how oppoſite her views to every thing, which *we* deem lovely in the ſex ! O, lovely ALAGRA, the brighteſt gem that ſparkles on the beautiful plains of AGIMERE, how would thy virgin ſoul ſhrink back at the contemplation of a female ſoul *unſexed* a man in female form !

LETTERS OF

A COMPLETE exhibition of the regenerating system of this female lunatic, would fatigue thy patience, and occupy too large a portion of these epistles.

so singular, however, is her system and so directly opposed to the received opinions of mankind, that I cannot refrain from tracing an imperfect outline. Not satisfied with masculine ideas, and masculine habits, Mary Wolstonecraft wished, as the consummation of female independence, to introduce the sex into the Camp, the Rostrum and the Cabinet; and although she does not recommend a total dereliction of *the household good*, still she would not cramp the female energies by an occupation so much beneath their dignity, except so far, as stern necessity commands.

SHE seriously advocates the right of female representation—for in this country, and in some parts of Europe, the right of representation, which in an epistle from England, I have already explained, is fully established.

SUPPOSE, my dear friend, that a band of female representatives, beautiful as the thirty RAGINIS,* who, crowned with flowery wreaths, dance to the muse of NARED, among the spicy groves of MALDOOVAN, should mix with a Legislative band ; would not the cares of Legislation be excluded by the witchcraft of love ! The charms of the fair Orator would plead more powerfully than her tongue, and gallantry would induce compliance, where reason would have stimulated to strenuous opposition.

IN the Cabinet, their sway would be still more complete. Smiles, tears and sighs would decide the fate of nations ; and beauty would direct the march of armies on the frontiers, and the course of navies upon the ocean.

IT is true that in *defensive* war only, Miss Woolstonecraft indulges the idea, which even *she* allows to be an enthusiastic one, of seeing the exploits of ancient

* Female Passions.

heroines renewed, and the deadly weapon directed by the hand of Beauty.

THIS idea of hers is undoubtedly a most ingenious one. At the sight of a band of heroines, beautiful as the morning, marching forward to the combat, what warrior's sword would not drop from his hand?—what soldier would not surrender himself a prisoner!

HAD the God RAMA, when he led forth his army of APES, and spread destruction among his enemies, only exchanged his apes for beautiful virgins, his victory would have been less bloody, and his conquest more complete.

AS a necessary preparative for the support of bodily fatigue, the female philosopher recommends an early initiation of females into the athletic sports, and gymnastic exercises of boys and young men.

SHE would have them run, leap, box, wrestle, fence and fight, that the united

exertion of bodily and mental energy may produce, by mysterious cooperation, that amazing force of character, of which she supposes her sex to be capable.

SHE even recommends that these sports should be mutually shared between girls and boys, that the distinction of sex may remain concealed, until the physical progress of the body, calling into operation the latent passions, shall discover the wonderful secret.

THIS strange philosopher, my dear El Hassan, has detained me, by the novelty of her doctrines, longer than I intended. Perhaps in some future communication, I may notice some of her remaining tenets ; and I intend particularly to delineate the practical influence, which they have already acquired over the female sex in this country.

KEEP this philosophy a profound secret from the fair daughters of Hindustan, for, thou canst not divine what in-

fluence its novelty, and the idea of independence on man may have over the heart even of the modest, unassuming Hindu.

SALUTATION to the great GANESA.



Letter Third.

DEAR EL HASSAN, FRIEND OF MY HEART,

I HAVE not yet detailed all the paradoxes of the female philosopher, to whose acquaintance I have lately introduced thee.

I HAVE before said that she ridicules the idea of female modesty. To prove that *her energies* are not cramped by so embarrassing a restraint, she writes with the most disgusting coarseness, upon subjects, which are studiously excluded from modest societies, and reserved by common consent, for the investigation of men of science.

SHE even informs the world, that she has been present at anatomical, surgical and obstetrick lectures, conversations and experiments, where the various parts of the human body have been dissected, and their uses descanted upon; and all

this she has witnessed, without a blush, and without a painful emotion. She does not doubt, that every female may, in the same manner, free herself from the factitious weakness of education, and acquire that hardihood of character, which shall forever free her from the unphilosophical habit of blushing.

WITH the utmost indifference, she enters upon a disquisition concerning the causes of the greater number of women than of men in Africa, calmly ascribing the fact to polygamy, which, she says, enervates the physical energies of the men, and thereby incapacitates them from becoming the *fathers* of so many *sons*, as they otherwise would; for, she assumes it as a principle, that the sex of an animal is determined, by the predominant *energy* of one parent over that of the other, *nature* delighting, universally, to produce its own image.

POLYGAMY, thus, according to her theory, wherever it is already established, produces an excess of women; and each

individual woman demanding the gallantries of the men, polygamy is necessarily continued.

SUCH are the subjects, and such is the method of treating them, recommended by the new philosophy to its female disciples.

MISS Woolstonecraft is extremely anxious to establish the idea, that seduced and dishonored females are still entitled to the regard of society, especially if they continue "*faithful to the father of their children*," whether that father is a husband, or merely a gallant. In other words, she would esteem a *kept mistress*, (such as she was herself) entitled to equal respect and attention as the faithful wife.

IT requires no great acuteness to discern the reason why Mary labored to establish this doctrine. She was herself a *lewd woman*; and unless lewd women could be made respectable, she was conscious that she must also yield to that infamy, which well regulated societies universally throw upon female impurity. After be-

ing engaged in several open and shameful amours, particularly with a Mr. *Imlay*, an American gentleman, and Mr. *Fuseli*, an Italian, Miss *Woolstonecraft*, toward the close of her life, married one WILLIAM GODWIN, having previously cohabited with him several months. This man has written her history, in which, so far from expressing any remorse on account of his connection with so abandoned a woman, he celebrates, in strains of philosophical eulogium, the purity of her mind, and the ardor of her affections. Her *amours* he calls *affairs of the heart*, and her gallants *sentimental lovers*.

THIS Godwin, you must know, is one of the new philosophers. Of him, and his works I may possibly, hereafter, take some notice, as he has distinguished himself above his fellows for the systematical absurdity, and extravagant folly of his writings. For the present, the anecdote above mentioned may serve to give some idea of *his* character, as well as of that of modern reforming philosophers generally.

ONE trait in the character of Mary Woolstonecraft I cannot omit.

ALTHOUGH she professes some general regard for religion and an over ruling power, still she disclaims the most essential parts of the religion of her country, and leaves us entirely in doubt whether she had any system of belief or not:

I HAVE already informed thee, my dear El Haffan, that the people of this country have a book similar to our *Veda* and *Shahstah*, which they call the BIBLE. This book contains an account of the creation of all things; of the production of one human pair, from whom descended all the inhabitants of the earth; of the destruction of all creatures by a great deluge, excepting one good man and his family, and a few animals of every kind, who were saved in the ark.

THIS account the female philosopher treats with contempt; she calls it a *poetical story*, and evidently allows it no authenticity.

AND yet, thou knowest, that *our* sacred books contain an account similar in most respects, although shaded with an allegorical meaning. One good man is represented as having been saved from the flood, with seven other persons, corresponding with the number mentioned in the Bible. Our books relate, also, that the gods churned the immense ocean with the mountain MANDAR, and raised from the bottom, by the force of fermentation, all things which had been overwhelmed by the deluge.

THE Bible relates that the waters retired by degrees, and thus produced, though in a different way, the same effect.

THE idea of future retribution, in another state of being, Miss Woolstonecraft ridicules, treating it as a notion too slavish for the belief of a philosopher.

THIS is another idea which thou knowest that our *sacred books* expressly recognize, and forcibly inculcate. Every faithful Hindu believes, that after death, *some souls* will be sent down to the infernal

pits, there to spend a dreadful existence, among frightful serpents, and all the horrible tortures of the damned. The infernal deities SEVA and CALI, who delight in the infliction of misery, preside over these dreadful regions.

TO other souls, thou knowest, that the God SATYAVRATA will shew the road to inexpressible bliss. To the vulgar, whose minds are incapable of the sublime pleasures of exalted intellectual enjoyments, the happy regions are described, by our sacred books, as being the abode of the most exquisite sensual delight.

THERE, perpetual spring, crowned with fruits and flowers and everlasting verdure, dances round the year ; “the precious *Musk Deer*” sport in the Sandal Groves, while the immortal inhabitants repose on the spreading down of the *Lotos*, or dance, in fairy ringlets, to the music of NARED.

BUT to thee, my dear El Hassan, who hast a mind enlarged by philosophy, and

refined from the grossness of sensuality, these enjoyments appear trivial. Thou, with me, wilt rather place thy future enjoyments, in those exalted pleasures of the understanding, and those strong and refined affections of the heart, which our philosophers, of the *Vedanta* school, so eloquently describe.

ANOTHER class of souls, thou knowest will be compelled to endure the servitude of transmigration ; inhabiting the bodies of animals possessing characters similar to those, by which they themselves, while in life, were distinguished. Thus, thou perceivest that the idea of future retribution is one, whose propriety and truth, both our education and reason strongly enforce. Still, it is despised and contemptuously rejected by this female philosopher.

ACCUSTOMED as thou hast been, from thy youth, to venerate the precepts of the aged, and to honor the dictates of thy parents, thou wilt be shocked, that a philosopher should presume to impeach the propriety of those sentiments. But MARY, strenuously argues, that no more re-

spect should be paid to the opinions of a parent, than to those of any other rational being.

THAT any one should be subjected to the control of another, either in his opinions or conduct, merely because chance has made that being his parent, she declares to be highly absurd. Thou may'st be able to judge, how far this new philosophy conduced to the happiness of the female philosopher, when thou art informed, that she attempted to destroy her own life. Repeatedly did she seek the oblivion of death, by throwing herself into the *Thames* ; and as often was she rescued from a watery grave.

THUS, my dear El Hassan, have I explained to thee, rather more copiously, than I intended, the leading features of this new system of female philosophy.

SUCH extravagant and impious speculations could proceed only from a phrenzied and extravagant mind. Accordingly, the style, in which they are written, is

obscure, rhapsodical, and often wholly unintelligible. The figures are usually daubed with extravagant coloring ; shadows and substances are joined ; “ he-goats and foxes are yoked together ;” and a man of a correct mind, and a dignified taste, will be shocked with rhetorical absurdities in every page.

“ SALUTATION to the great Ganefa.”
May the Almighty BRUMMA enlighten our minds with true philosophy, and preserve us from philosophical madness.



Letter Fourth.

DEARLY BELOVED EL HASSAN,

THE author of *The Rights of Woman* has not been alone in the great work of corrupting her sex. She has been aided by the whole band of modern philosophers ; operating, it is true, according to the particular system, which each proposed to himself ; but generally, the object and the effect have been the same.

THE influence of the new philosophy upon the female sex, has been more extensive, and more visible, in France, than in any other country. It is one capital object of this philosophy, to decry the institution of marriage. Accordingly, in France, this institution has been rendered almost useless by the facility, with which divorces are obtained.

THE theatre, the style of dress, the national taste, and in short, the whole con-

stitution of society, in that country, have tended directly, to cherish a spirit of refined voluptuousness; *refined*, I mean, as to the variety of the modes in which it seeks gratification, but *rampant* and *uncontrollable* in the spirits, which stimulates it to action. Of course, chastity has there become a very uncommon and unfashionable virtue; and many a fair lady may be found, who is neither *maid*, *widow*, nor *wife*.

THE new philosophy, as yet, has acquired, comparatively, only a limited influence over the females of America.— But, it has acquired an influence already too great, to escape the notice of a *real* philosopher.

THE females of Hindustan, thou knowest, are taught, that modesty is the brightest ornament of female virtue; and that concealment heightens the empire of beauty. Hence, they studiously veil those charms, whose exposure, indeed, swells the veins of the beholders with a torrent of lawless passion; but soon produces satiety, indifference and disgust.

NOT all the wanton motions, the lascivious gestures, and the rich perfumes of *our dancing girls*, whom the laws of Hindustan allow to prostitute their persons, to secure the chastity of the virtuous part of the sex, can prevent disgust from filling the breasts of the beholders.

BUT, in America, although the women are beautiful as the sun, with complexions resembling the first blushes of the morning, and persons graceful as the poetical sisters, who wander in the spicy groves of MATH'URA, still, the new philosophy has induced them, in many instances, to expose their persons in such a manner, as to excite passion, but to extinguish respect.

THE style of dress, by which this exposure is effected, was first introduced by the theatres.

FREQUENTLY, when attending the theatre in this metropolis, I have seen the most beautiful actresses exhibit their persons, in robes of lawn, so transparent, and yet, so adhesive, as to discover every la-

tent proportion and beauty. In the robes of the other sex also, they expose their delicate limbs, and vainly emulate the firm step, and manly port, which nature has denied them.

FROM the stage this taste has descended into private life.

OFTEN, when reclining on a sofa, by the side of *a fair American*, I have thought, that her white bosom, scarcely veiled at all from my sight, and her finely proportioned limbs, which the extreme thinness and narrowness of her apparel rendered quite evident to the eye, would have excited impure emotions in any heart, less subject to reason, than that of *a Hindu philosopher*.

WHEN I have stopped in my walks, as I often do, at some public corner, the confined motion of the limbs, in robes scarcely eighteen inches in breadth, has enabled me to compare with great accuracy, the delicate proportions and graceful movements of the sprightly fair ones, who wander forth into the streets of this metropolis,

AT first, I supposed these females to be of the same class with the *dancing girls* of Hindustan, and, of course, concluded, that the state of society in America, where so many females appeared in the dress of courtezans, must be extremely depraved. But I have since discovered, that this dress is assumed by ladies of pure reputation, and unquestionable virtue.

THIS, my dear El Hassan, may be called the *heroism* of female chastity : For what lady of reputation, who is not a heroine in virtue, would dare to hang out to public view, the insignia of meretricious indulgence ? No conclusion must be drawn from these facts, that there are in this country, no ladies of *easy virtue*. Many such there are ; but they cannot be distinguished in the great cities, *by their dress*, from ladies of character.

ANOTHER effect of the new philosophy, probably imputable, in a great degree, to the influence of Miss Woolstonecraft's doctrines, must not be passed over in silence.

THE people of every country have their own peculiar modes of profaneness in discourse. By profaneness, I intend a contempt of sacred things ; and, in this sense, every people, of whatever religion, may be profane.

BUT by the universal consent of mankind, this vice is esteemed peculiarly vulgar, and wholly without apology.

IN women we always expect delicacy, and tenderness, and of course, reverence for the Gods. Whenever any of the gross vices of men are found in women, they are, therefore, peculiarly disgusting.—What then, O El Haffan, who hast ever been accustomed to hear the women of Hindustan, utter the awful names of BRUMMA and SERASWATY, with uplifted eyes, and features solemnized by devotion ;—what will be thy astonishment to hear, that the females of this country profane, with the most flippant levity, the name of their God, ridicule his attributes and his worship, and distribute curses as the common compliments of an evening. Yet,

these things I have often witnessed in this metropolis. Not unfrequently, have I heard a fair one, who seemed to have been born for tenderness and love, *curse* her fate at the card table, *damn* the soul of her partner for his inattention to the game, *swear* that *this* was the most unlucky incident of her life, and grace every exclamation, by an impious appeal to her god.

ALTHOUGH true to the holy religion of the Bramins, and unseduced by the systems of other countries, I could not hear this impiety without horror. My blood chilled, and I involuntarily indulged the idea, that the creature, whom I had seen, so fair, so delicate, and lovely, was but a fiend, disguised in a female form, to give to vice the borrowed charms of beauty; and to enable it to steal imperceptibly upon hearts, which would have recoiled, had it approached in its own native deformity.

I AM told, that this vice existed before the origin of the new philosophy; but that

this philosophy has given it a most alarming and extensive increase.

WITHOUT any reference to its horrid impiety, did the fair creatures, who use such language, only know how completely it strips them of every feminine charm, and how odious it makes them appear in the eyes of those, whom they are most anxious to please, they would surely abandon a practice, which in *men* is offensive, but in *woman* is disgustingly shocking. Indeed, what can be more unnatural, than that a beautiful virgin should utter a sigh and a curse in the same breath? Surely, a man of modesty and virtue, will turn with aversion from so unnatural a being.

IT is a remarkable fact, that this practice has acquired the most extensive sway in the most genteel and polished circles; while in those, which are equally removed from meanness and pride, it hardly has an existence.

THE athletic exercises, which the female philosopher so cogently recom-

mends, have been adopted, in America, only in a partial degree.

I HAVE indeed heard of a great *Nabob* in this country, who has educated his daughter to leap a fence without bringing her clothes into contact, to vault from the ground into the saddle, and even to manage a mettlesome horse, while standing upon one foot, on his back.

A LADY, also, at *Salem*, a town far to the north-east, in a Soubah or District, called *Massachusetts*, initiates young virgins, into the invigorating exercise of skating; an amusement, which, in an epistle from Holland, I have already explained. One would suppose, that the narrow apparel of fashionable females, would greatly impede the exertions of the fair one's *energies*, in this most slippery diversion; and should she fall headlong, (an accident which often occurs to boys,) who can divine the consequences, which might ensue?

O, EL HASSAN, my friend! how would it affect thy heart and mind, to see these

unnatural practices introduced among the daughters of Hindustan ? Still may they remain modest, timid and feminine, and may no cold-hearted, ferocious philosopher attempt to substitute that masculine robustness of character, which Mary Wollstonecraft inculcates, in the place of that delightful tenderness, which adorns every female action, which enlivens prosperity, and smooths the pillow of grief.



Letter Fifth.

DEARLY BELOVED EL HASSAN,

IMMENSE oceans roll a waste of water, and unexplored continents stretch their regions between SHAHCOOLEN and those he loves.

How often does my heart sigh for the shady bowers of Agra, my dear native land ; how do I dwell upon those happy days, when in company with thee, I wandered in the flowery vale of Cashmere ;—walked by moonlight upon the banks of the ancient Indus ; watched the revolutions of the year, and the setting of Orion, from the top of Mat'hura ; visited the venerable abodes of the Bramins, upon the borders of the sacred Ganges ; or plunged my limbs in its purifying waves ? In search of knowledge, to which my life has been devoted, we then explored the immense regions of Hindustan, and surveyed the inhabitants of Ceylon, breath-

E

ing aromatic gales, and the wretched out-cast, who gathers gems in the mines of Golconda.

TO a real philosopher, man is the most interesting subject of contemplation.—Majestic mountains, magnificent rivers, flowery vallies, and boundless landscapes, occur in every country, and are presented to every eye.

EVEN those regions, where cold and darkness, in one unceasing night, usurp the empire of half the year ; and where, during that period, the eye surveys nothing but one boundless waste of snow ; still enjoy an equal period of day ; when the sun does not set, verdure springs upon the hills, animals sport upon the plains, and birds flutter through the air.

THEN, perhaps, the Greenlander, beholding his fields, lately buried in snow, but now verdant and beautiful, feels no less delight than the native of ORIXA, who reclines beneath bowers, that are always green, and listens to the bubbling of

streams that are never arrested by frost ; and while contemplating his mountains, whose sides are verdant, but whose tops are covered with everlasting snow, or surveying those huge drifts of ice, which, while they lift their sparkling turrets to the sun, are driven by impetuous billows upon the rocks, which lie concealed in the ocean, perhaps he enjoys a degree of pleasure, which may compensate for the want of vallies smiling with the *Lotos*, and hills shaded by the *Vine*.

BUT my dear El Hassan, although my senses are perpetually alive to the charming variety of natural scenes, which the face of the earth every where exhibits ; still, MAN is my object, for *I myself* am a Man.

MY three last epistles were employed in delineating the doctrines of the new female philosophy, and their influence upon the female character in America. The remainder of this epistle I shall devote to an exhibition of the existing character and pursuits of the female sex in this country,

distributing them, as far as possible, into general classes.

THOSE, whom native depravity, or the arts of seduction, have exposed to the degradation of mercenary intercourse, are comparatively few ; but still they are so numerous, especially in the great towns, as frequently to excite both pity and disgust.

IT is certainly a just law, although it is a severe one, which virtuous societies universally have established, that a single error in the great article of female purity, should brand its unfortunate subject with a degree of infamy, which no lapse of time, and no future course of virtue, can entirely obliterate.

BUT it is much to be regretted, that legislators and patriots have not established some school of reformation, where these unfortunate beings may take refuge from guilt, disease, and infamy, and by a course of sober industry, and of regular conduct, procure an honest support, make some advances toward a recovery

of reputation, and some progress in real virtue. But, in most countries, they are shunned and abandoned by all, except those, whom guilty passions stimulate to seek out the abodes of infamy and wretchedness. To the honor of this metropolis, however, be it recorded, that an institution, founded upon the most benevolent principles, has been lately established for the purpose specified above.

AFTER we have excluded the infamous and abandoned, the women of this country may be distributed, with tolerable correctness, into three descriptions.

THERE is a class, whom both nature and education have destined to move in the humblest walks of life. They are ignorant, patient, and laborious; commonly faithful to their families; they wear out life in hard labour for their support. Their time is divided between slavish servitude, and sluggish repose; and the only recreation, which they enjoy, is an occasional visit to the neighboring women of the same degree, when their vanity is gra-

tified by a display of their best apparel, a little Bohea recreates the spirits, and the village stories employ the tongue. On Sunday, also, the day of worship, they sometimes appear at church, where, as it usually happens to ladies of superior rank, nothing, apparently, engages their attention less, than the exercises of the day. Upon the whole, this class of women are confined to a sphere of life, where little can be enjoyed, though much must be endured.

OF the two other classes, *the ladies of quality*, in every thing, but the degree of happiness, which they enjoy, form the perfect contrast to the one last described.

WITH them pleasure constitutes the great business of life. Their time is divided between the transports of dissipation, and the listlessness of *ennui*. When evening arrives, the fair creature rolls in the gilded chariot to the play house. There the splendor of the lights, of the scenery, and the company, with the strains of the music, and the tones, dress and action of the

players, lay hold on her senses, warm her imagination to rhapsody, and produce a temporary impression, that she is transported to a new and more exalted state of things, where grief is despair, and love is extacy. She mourns for poor *Monimia*, weeps for hapless *Desdemona*, and glows with rage at the black crimes of *Milwood*.

ALTHOUGH gross indelicacy, both in dress and language, appear upon the stage, still the fair one joins the rank applause, and aids the guilty triumph. In the intervals of the play, perhaps she ogles at some favorite beau, peeps through the lattice of her fan, while she seems to hide her face, or whispers some romantic sentiment to the belle, who sits next to her.

AFTER the play she returns home, sick of the dull scenes of real life, longs to become the heroine of some adventure, and the favorite of some gallant knight. She flumbers on a bed of down, and beneath a canopy of silk, till the sun has travelled half way from the dawn to the meridian.

Then, languid and pale, through excessive indulgence, she redeems time enough from sleep to dress for the evening.

THE circus, perhaps, opens its doors, and the delicate creature, who would have shrieked at a spider, and swooned at a mouse, flies with alacrity to see feats of dangerous activity, and perilous horsemanship.

THE circus, my dear El Hassan, is a place where men, who have been trained to the business, mount horses of great activity, which are driven round upon half speed within the circular building, where the spectators are seated. While the horses are in full motion, the riders vault from the ground into the saddle, and back to the ground again ; stand upon one foot, on the horse, with the toes of the other foot in the mouth ;—sustain a boy erect upon the shoulder ; and perform a thousand other feats, the sight of which, to a man of humanity, is painful in the extreme.

THOU wilt ask, what there is in this amusement, which can interest a rational mind? I have often asked the question too; but have been told, that I had mistaken the object of the amusement; for, it was invented for the entertainment of *ladies of quality*.

THOU wilt hardly credit the idea, that ladies should be entertained by an amusement, which is both distressing and indecent; for as well might the women of Hindustan resort to the vallies of BAHAR, to see the unwieldy movements of the elephants, which are tamed for war.

BUT I have learned from an accurate survey of human life, ~~that~~ that there is no amusement, however foreign from the delicacy of the sex, and no dress, however indecent, which the tyranny of fashion will not impose upon *ladies of quality*, in countries, which have not, like Hindustan, wisely regulated the *contour* of a garment, and the diversions of an evening.

IF both the circus and the theatre are closed, perhaps the fair lady, when the

first shades of night darken the vallies, resorts to a gay circle, sips hyson, nibbles half a biscuit, and relates the perils she encountered in passing the dark passage at the last play, where the courage of Sir *Christopher Lovelace*, saved her from the loss of her slipper.

THE piano or harpsicord beguiles the first moments of the evening, but presently, the card-tables are displayed, and every eye is fixed, and every mind is intent upon the progress of the game. The fickle goddess, fortune, flutters from side to side, and seems in doubt where to rest, till at length she settles upon the breast of some fair gamester.

IT would be disgusting to describe all the four looks, the heart-burnings, and genteel curses, which occur on both sides of the game, before the clock strikes *three*, and the harbinger of day, sounds his shrill clarion at the approach of light.

THEN, these ladies of quality, with jaded spirits, and distempered minds, retire to feverish dreams, and broken slumbers.

NOW and then, an idle hour is spent in poring over the page of some glowing novel, or extravagant romance ; an airing is taken in a coach with closed windows ; a morning call is made, or a gilded fan cheapened.

THE ball also displays its dazzling splendors, where elegance, music, and luxury, reign within, while winter rages without. Here, the fair one, in all the pomp of dress, floats down the dance ;—while the fop, a *gilded insect*, flutters by her side.

THUS, with these ladies, life is one scene of varying dissipation, with such interruptions only, as nature imperiously demands, to restore her exhausted powers. All the endearing charities of mother, sister, wife, are swallowed up in one wide gulf of dissipation ; and the mind, barren of useful information, and the heart, destitute of practical virtue, fall a prey to despair, whenever sickness seizes on the constitution, or old age destroys its youthful powers.

O, MY dear El Hassan, wouldst thou select such an one for the wife of thy bosom, or the mother of thy children?—Would her smiles thrill thy heart with joy? Would her tenderness cheer thy sick bed, or her endearing converse beguile thy midnight hours?

BUT the other and remaining class of American women, is of a character entirely different from either of those, which I have described. They are placed above the miseries and meanness of poverty; and below the vices and vanity of wealth.

EARLY imbued with virtue and modesty, they are rational, domestic, and industrious. Their life is divided between useful employment, cheerful society, and virtuous and moderate amusements. Rarely at the theatre and assembly room, and *never* at the circus and card-table, their pleasures give a zest to life, and render welcome the return of the fire-side happiness, and the family society. Business is with them the pleasure, not pleasure the business, of life. They rise to breathe the sweet incense of the morning,

which the joyful earth offers to its great Creator ; they listen to the matin song of the lark, while she mounts into the clouds that are gilded with the first effusions of light.

THE volumes which contain the precepts of religion and morals ; those which unfold the springs of human action, and delineate the thousand shades of human character ; the clear page of history ; the books of the fine arts, and the treasures of poetical lore, all lie open to their perusal, and occupy a portion of each passing day.

THE domestic offices, and the household good, are not forgotten. Conscious that the family is the great scene of female action, and of female pleasure, here they concentrate their most serious thoughts, and make their most serious exertions.

DESPISING, alike, that contemptible servility, which would ascribe to them the perfections of angels, and offer them the adoration of Gods ; and that unnatural system of false philosophy, which would

harden them into masculine beings, too proud to be women, too weak to be men, they cultivate the feminine virtues, sweeten every action by tenderness, and grace every sentiment by love. O, my dear El Hassan, wouldst thou not select such an one for the wife of thy bosom, and the mother of thy children ? Would not her smiles thrill thy heart with joy ? Would not her tenderness cheer thy sick bed, and her endearing converse beguile thy midnight hours ? Salutation to Ganessa.



Letter Sixth.

DEARLY BELOVED EL HASSAN,

THE *Poetry* of a country is among the last subjects, which a traveller is able to investigate.

A PERFECT knowledge of the language, not only in its radical powers, but in all its delicate beauties, and nameless varieties of signification, and a complete acquaintance with the geography, history, literature, employment and genius of the nation, are indispensably necessary to one, who would fully understand and highly relish the *Poetry of the country* which he visits.

THE literature of Great Britain and of English America, is enjoyed in common by both countries. Both have the same language ; and so great a similarity exists between their laws, institutions, state of society, and national pursuits,

that the literary productions of the one nation are perfectly understood and relished by the other.

BUT as English America was planted by Great-Britain, the latter is advanced far beyond the former in every department of literature.

WERE I to attempt a complete account of English literature, embracing the learning of both countries, I should indeed enter a most extensive field.

EVEN English *Poetry* alone would afford a very copious source of entertainment ; for the English poets are very numerous, and some of their productions would not suffer by a comparison with those of any age or country.

THE names of *Milton*, *Dryden*, *Shakespeare* and *Pope* will be revered, so long as their productions survive the ravages of time.

BUT at present, I intend to confine my remarks principally to the state of poetry in *America*.

two centuries ago, English America was peopled by a savage race of men, entirely destitute of learning, arts and laws. Within two hundred years, it has been populated by emigrants from various European countries, but principally from Great Britain.

IN that short period, they have increased to more than 5,000,000 ; have built numberless cities, towns and villages ; reduced to cultivation a country of immense extent ; established a commerce with every part of the globe, and accumulated wealth, and advanced in the arts, to a degree, which no human mind could have foreseen,

NOR has their literature been entirely neglected. Very respectable proofs of American erudition and talents in many departments of science can be produced,

BUT thou knowest, beloved El Haffan, that we must not look for great efforts in science, and high attainments in arts in a young country. Such efforts, and such

attainments, are exhibited only in a mature state of society, where great wealth and undivided leisure afford the means of pursuing, and cherish a disposition to relish the most refined speculations of science, and the most elegant productions of taste.

we might therefore have reasonably supposed, what I have found to be the fact, that the literature of this country is still in its infancy. In some future epistle I may suggest farther remarks upon American literature; but I will now return from this excursion to the consideration of the state of *poetry* in English America.

THE poetical productions of this country are not numerous; those I mean which are of considerable length, and are calculated to endure to future generations.

AMONG the principal are the Conquest of Canaan, an epic poem, by Dwight; the Vision of Columbus, by Barlow; and M'Fingal, a burlesque epic poem, by Trumbull.

THE Conquest of Canaan, was written while the author was very young. It rises in many instances to high sublimity, and not a few passages might be selected of peculiar poetical beauty and refined tenderness. It is remarkable that no passage can be pointed out, which would give offence to the strictest morality; and its love scenes are distinguished by a freedom from every degree of licentiousness. But the poem labors under a disadvantage from its being written in rhyme. This evidently subjects the poet to much restraint. His mind appears to have been ardent and vigorous, and his imagination sublime; but his conceptions are cramped by his poetical fetters, and not unfrequently labor in consequence of the poverty of language.

HIS rhyme also, from the length of the poem, produces an uniformity, which is sometimes unpleasant.—I will not enter into a minute criticism upon this Poem, but content myself with producing a single passage, which will give some idea of

the author's manner of writing.—He is describing the precursors of the final dissolution of the world.

“Mid these dire scenes, more awful scenes shall rise,
 Sad nations quake, and trembling seize the skies,
 From the dark tomb shall fearful lights ascend;
 And fallen sounds the sleeping mansion rend;
 Pale ghosts with terror break the dreamer's charm,
 And death-like cries the listening world alarm.
 Then midnight pangs shall toss the cleaving plains;
 Fell famine wanton o'er unburied trains;
 From crumbling mountains baleful flames aspire
 Realms sink in floods, and towns dissolve in fire;
 In every blast the spotted plague be driven,
 And angry meteors blaze athwart the heaven.
 Clouds of dark blood shall blot the sun's broad light,
 Spread round th' immense, and shroud the world in night.
 With pale and dreadful ray the cold moon gleam;
 The dim lone stars diffuse an anguish'd beam;
 Storms rock the skies; afflicted ocean roar,
 And sanguine billows die the shuddering shore.” &c.

THE author of the Conquest of Canaan, has written several other poems. I could with pleasure copy many parts of them, which in my view are highly excellent; but the limits of this epistle will not permit me to extract very copiously. Take the following beautiful introduction to “GREENFIELD HILL,” as a specimen of the author's talents in blank verse.

"From Southern isles, on winds of gentlest wing,
Sprinkled with morning dew, and rob'd in green,
Life in her eye, and music in her voice ;
Lo, Spring returns, and wakes the world to joy !
Forth creep the smiling herbs ; expand the flowers,
New-loos'd, and bursting from their icy bonds,
The streams fresh warble, and thro every mead
Convey reviving verdure ; every bough,
Full blown and lovely, teems with sweets and songs,
And hills and plains, and pastures feel the prime."

A SHORT poem, called *Columbia*, by the same author, possesses great merit ; also, a satirical piece in verse, lashing the critics, who, as the poet conceived, had treated his works too severely. Another satirical poem, the *Triumph of Infidelity*, is uniformly ascribed to the same writer, though never acknowledged by him, in which, under fictitious names, he chastises several great personages, distinguished by their impiety and their vices.

THIS author has published more poetry than any other American, (except, perhaps FRENAU, a poet remarkable only for the quantity of verse which he has written), and although his countrymen are now divided in sentiment, as to the degree of fame, to which he is entitled, it is

probable that posterity will judge of his works with that impartiality, which is frequently denied to a living author, but exercised towards him when he is sleeping in the dust, and is equally deaf to the praises of his friends and the reproaches of his enemies.

THE Vision of Columbus flows in easy verse, generally correct and polished, but sometimes mutilating the sentiment for the sake of the rhyme.

ALTHOUGH Barlow does not exhibit the strength and sublimity of Dwight, he certainly possesses very handsome poetical talents. His taste is elegant, and never leads him into bombast or frigidity. If his poetry does not rise so high, it never sinks so low as that of some good writers.

THE following is selected from the description of a storm on the high mountains called the Andes :—

“ While, far beneath, the sky-borne waters ride,
O'er the dark deep, and up the mountain's side;
The lightening's glancing wings, in fury curl'd,
Bend their long forky terrors o'er the world;
Torrents, and broken crags, and floods of rain

SHAHCOOLEN.

From steep to steep roll down their force amain,
In dreadful cataracts; the crashing sound
Fills the wide heavens, and rocks the mouldering ground.
The blasts, unburden'd, take their upward course
And, o'er the mountain's top, resume their force:
Swift thro' the long white ridges from the north,
The rapid whirlwinds lead their terrors forth;
High rolls the storm, the circling furies rife,
And wild gyrations wheel the hovering skies:
Vast hills of snow, in sweeping columns driven
Deluge the air, and cloud the face of heaven;
Floods burst their chains, the rocks forget their place,
And the firm mountain trembles to its base."

BARLOW has published several smaller poems.

HIS "Conspiracy of Kings" is energetic and glowing, but instead of rising to that dignity, which its title promises; it bursts forth into enthusiastic aspirations after visionary liberty, and expires in philosophical raptures of universal benevolence, and mad execrations upon crowned heads.

As the writer, who has resided in France for several years past, has become a disciple of the new philosophy, and abused the religion, of which he was once a priest, perhaps some degree of the odium,

which is heaped upon his character, is attached by his countrymen to his poetical productions.

IT is therefore probable that, at some future period, his merits, as a poet, will be more justly appreciated, than at present.

THE Mock Epic Poem entitled M'Fingal, is a high instance of keen wit, severe satire, and poetical beauty.

THE author possesses a mind originally ingenious, acute and brilliant ; he has drawn in to his aid the stores of Grecian and Roman learning ; he is perfectly at home, when upon classical ground, and alludes with the most happy familiarity to the highest monuments of poetical genius.

IT is impossible to peruse a single page of his admirable production without delight. The lines which open the fourth Canto I have selected, to afford thee a moment's pleasure.

“ Now night came down, and rose full soon
That patroness of rogues, the moon ;
Beneath whose kind protecting ray
Wolves, brute and human, prowled for prey.

The honest world all snor'd in chorus,
 While owls and ghosts and thieves and tories,
 Whom erst the mid-day sun had aw'd,
 Crept from their lurking holes abroad.
 On cautious hinges, slow and stiller
 Wide op'd the great M'Fingal's cellar,
 Where shut from prying eyes in cluster,
 The tory Pandemonium muster.
 Their chiefs all sitting round descried are,
 On kegs of ale and seats of cyder ;
 When first M'Fingal, dimly seen,
 Rose solemn from the turnip bin.
 Nor yet his form had wholly lost
 The original brightness, it could boast,
 Nor less appear'd than Justice Quorum,
 In feather'd majesty before 'em."

THE description of M'Fingal's tarring
 and feathering is so humorous, that I can-
 not forbear extracting it.

" Forthwith the croud proceed to deck,
 With halter'd noose M'Fingal's neck,
 While he, in peril of his soul,
 Stood tied half-hanging to the pole ;
 Then lifting high the pond'rous jar,
 Pour'd o'er his head the smoking tar :
 * * * * *
 His flowing wig, as next the brim,
 First met and drank the sable stream ;
 Adown his visage stern and grave,
 Roll'd and adher'd the viscid wave ;

With arms depending as he stood,
 Each cuff capacious holds the flood ;
 From nose and chin's remotest end,
 The tarry icicles depend ;
 Till all o'erspread with colors gay
 He glitter'd to the western ray,
 Like fleet-bound trees in wintry skies,
 Or Lapland idól carv'd in ice.
 And now the feather-bag display'd,
 Is wav'd in triumph o'er his head,
 And spreads him o'er with feathers missive
 And down upon the tar adhesive."

AGAIN, the description of the procession :

"Then on the two-wheeled car of state,
 They rais'd our grand Triumvirate.

* * * * *

With like devotion all the choir
 Paraded round our feather'd 'squire ;
 In front the martial music comes
 Of horns and fiddles, fifes and drums,
 With jingling sound of carriage bells,
 And treble creak of rusted wheels ;
 Behind, the crowd in lengthen'd row
 With grave procession clos'd the show." &c.

INDEED, to do justice to this Poem, I
 should be obliged to transcribe the whole.
 No Poem of American composition has

gained equal celebrity, and commanded in an equal degree, the admiration both of Europeans and Americans.

HUMPHREYS also has gained considerable reputation as a poet; but his productions have been short and occasional. Some of his best pieces were written amidst the tumult of a camp, and cannot, therefore, be expected to exhibit the accuracy of a closeted student. Although sometimes incorrect, he exhibits undeniable proof of poetical genius. He was at once a soldier, a poet, and a gentleman.

THE following is an extract from his elegy on the burning of a town by the British troops. It was written on the spot, soon after the event.

“ Ye smoking ruins, marks of hostile ire,
Ye ashes warm, which drink the tears that flow;
Ye desolated plains my voice inspire,
And give soft music to the song of woe.

How pleasant FAIRFIELD, on th’ enraptur’d fight,
Rose thy tall spires, and op’d thy social halls;
How oft, my bosom beat with pure delight,
At yonder spot where stand the darken’d walls.

But there the voice of mirth resounds no more,
A silent sadness thro' the street prevails :
The distant main alone is heard to roar,
And hollow chimnies hum with fullen gales.

Save where scorch'd Elms th' untimely foliage shed,
Which rustling hovers round the faded green ;
Save where at twilight pensive mourners tread
Mid recent graves o'er desolation's scene."

THE four poets whom I have mentioned are still in the vigor of life. The three last are natives of a small province, lying to the North, called Connecticut ; and all of them were educated at the same school, and were mutually companions and friends..

HOPKINSON is a poet of great brilliancy, elegance and wit. His productions however are short and occasional. During the last war, which has existed in this country, a plan was devised by the Americans, to blow up the British fleets, by means of powder kegs. The consternation, spread among the British, by some of these kegs floating down the Delaware, among their shipping, is most humorously described by HOPKINSON, in "The Battle

of the Kegs." It would be doing the poet injustice to extract any part of it, without giving the whole.

IT will be admired, so long as a taste for wit shall exist in the world.

LIVINGSTON, as being one of the first, by whom elegant verse was written in America, deserves to be mentioned.

HE discovers genius, taste, and universally just sentiments.

A POEM, called *the Power of Genius*, has lately appeared in this metropolis ; it is of unequal merit in its different parts, and has hardly passed the public scrutiny in such a manner, as to gain a decided character. I hesitate not however to say that the writer is a poet, and a man of genius.

HE is not always perfectly correct in the use of figures, but his Poem certainly possesses much merit.

TAKE the following lines as an example. The poet is eulogising the most dis-

tinguished bards of ancient and modern times.

“ Amidst his native wilds and misty plains
 Sublimest Ossian pours his wizard strains,
 The voice of old revisits his dark dream,
 On his sad soul the deeds of warriors beam ;
 Alone he sits upon the distant hill,
 Beneath him falls the melancholy rill.
 His harp lies by him on the rustling grass,
 The deer before him thro the thickets past ;
 No hunter winds his slow and fullen horn,
 No whistling cowherd meets the breath of morn ;
 O'er the still heath the meteors dart their light
 And round him sweep the mournful blasts of night.
 O voice of Cora, bard of other times,
 May thy bold spirit visit these dull climes ;
 May the brave chieftans of thy rugged plains
 Remember Ossian, and revere his strains.

THESE are the most distinguished American poets. Many short and occasional productions have fallen in my way; and some of them possess a high degree of merit; but as they are generally committed to pamphlets and news papers, they hardly survive the revolutions of a year. A poem of this kind, however, intitled *the Present State of Literature*, possesses uncommon merit, and the closing lines of it, shall also close this epistle.

"And O, sweet Poesy ! thou nymph forlorn,
 Cold, and unheeded, as the wintry thorn ;
 Still may thy voice be heard, where Ganges flows,
 On winter sits, girt with eternal snows ;
 No venal spot upon thy robe be seen ;
 No lustful passion wanton in thy mein ;
 Still may'st thou lead with thy enchanting strain,
 The mimic arts, light dancing in thy train ;
 Fair virtue hail thee with a sister's eye ;
 Love own thy power, and pity learn to sigh.
 May sacred truth, from thy rich wardrobe dress'd,
 Come smiling forth, of every charm possess'd,
 And faith and piety, upborne by thee,
 From earth ascend and bend th' adoring knee."

THOU, my dear El Hassan, wilt per-
 ceive with pleasure, the allusion which this
 writer makes to our beloved country.
 To me it was grateful as the fragrance of
 the morning to the early traveller.



Letter Seventh.

DEARLY BELOVED EL HASSAN,

KNOWING thy attachment to the Musical KRISHEN, and the nine tuneful GOPIA, his attendants ; and remembering how thy soul used to glow with celestial fire, and thy tongue to roll in harmonious periods, I enlarged my last epistle by several extracts from the volumes of American Poetry.

TO thee, my friend, who art both a philosopher and a poet, it cannot fail of affording delight, to know how a people, who are separated from Hindustan by one half the globe, express the emotions of passion, and the flights of fancy.

BUT American poetry is as different from that of Hindustan, as the American himself is different from the Hindu. The poetry of every nation is characteristic of itself, and if all historical records were

destroyed, and the poetry of every country preserved, it would not be difficult, from that source alone, to discover national characters.

AS in my last epistle, I mentioned the principal American poems, thou wilt perceive, that only a small share of attention has yet been paid to the cultivation of poetry, in America. This does not arise from a deficiency of poetical talents, but from the state of society. For I have conversed with many Americans, whose souls were elevated by the purest poetical fire; whose minds were familiar with every dreadful, and every pleasing scene; who had been accustomed to contemplate, every thing which is "awfully vast, or elegantly little;" and to whom nature had opened her most copious stores of language.

I AM told, also, that their schools and colleges, frequently exhibit very handsome proofs of poetical talents, which cultivation and leisure would probably ripen into the regular poetical character. But

every man is here a man of business. So universally is this true, that no American poet, *by profession*, can be found in the list of their literary men. All those, who have made any figure in poetry, have been men of business, who amused their leisure hours with the charms of verse.

NOR does the public taste encourage the cultivation of poetry. Party-spirit, and the lust of gain, rule the American nation with such undivided sway, as to engross every passion, and enlist every propensity. The meanest man is a politician equally with the greatest, and feels as if "the weight of mightiest monarchies," were to be sustained upon his shoulders.

AT some future period, when the state of society shall be so much matured, as to afford literary men the means of undivided leisure; and when a literary taste in the nation, shall in some degree control the present ruling passions, it is probable, that poetry will be so far cultivated and encouraged in America, that the same of

American Poets will be equally great, and their names equally respectable, with those of Great Britain.

THE natives of England, and of English America, excel the Hindus in strength, and clearness of reasoning. They are more addicted to logical and mathematical inquiries; and in these, the English have acquired an unrivalled celebrity, and the Americans are making very handsome improvements. Indeed, the first poets, both of England and America, are more distinguished for strength and sublimity, than those of Hindustan; but they are greatly inferior in that delicious luxuriance of imagination, and playful elegance of style, for which the Persian and Hindu poets are so remarkable.

INDEED, my dear El Haffan, when I indulge myself, as I frequently do, in perusing the volumes of Hindu and Persian poetry, which I have selected as the companions of my travels, and the amusement of my pensive hours, I lose myself in an ideal presence in my own dear na-

tive land : I suffer myself to be deluded into a conviction, that I am wandering in a fragrant grove, on the banks of the holy Ganges, marking the reflection of the moon-beams from its dimply waves, and listening to the songs of the night-loving birds, that sing from the fruit-dropping trees, and render vocal every spray. Then I start from my dream, the charming allusion is dissipated, and I cast my eyes around upon the land of strangers.

ALTHOUGH the scenes of nature in America, are less luxuriant, and the gilding of beauty is less splendid, than in Hindustan, still nature has here exerted her highest creative powers in the production of every thing, which is marked by amazing grandeur, and awful sublimity.

THE *rivers*, majestic in their origin, swell and expand in their progress, till embracing a thousand tributary streams, their breadth soon mocks the ken of human eye. Rolling on to the ocean, they visit a hundred climes ; they behold the painted savage, in his bark canoe, skim-

ming the surface with incredible velocity, and bear upon their bosoms the weight of navies. Some range to the North, and seek an outlet beneath the polar skies ; where the empire of *frost* yields, reluctantly, to the summer suns ; and where the most powerful torrents are arrested in their channels, and chained fast to the rocks. Others flow to the South, till, confined by banks, that are covered, through the whole year, with fruits and flowers, they are lost in oceans, that sparkle to the vertical sun, and roll beneath the burning line.

THE *mountains*, also, stretch, in connected ridges, through immense regions, and hide their craggy tops in the clouds of Heaven. Their summits are gilded with sun-beams, while their middle regions are involved in storms and darkness.

IMMENSE *lakes*, or inland seas, connected by straits, border the whole of the northern frontier of the United States, and connect, in commercial relations, countries, which are as remote from each other,

as the Barumpooter from the Indus. Between two of these lakes, the *cataract* of Niagara tumbles, headlong, from the clouds ; a white column of 170 feet in height, hangs suspended in the air ; the spray rises, and exhibits the rainbow in all its beauty ; while the thundering of the torrent drowns every other noise, and is heard in distant regions.

LANDSCAPES, of boundless extent, and infinite variety, are presented on every side. From the top of a mountain, in this country, I have frequently viewed the surrounding scenes, and felt the poetical ardor kindle within me at the prospect. With one glance, the eye will often survey extensive and luxuriant plains, covered with cattle, and rich in verdure ; rivers flowing with a smooth and undisturbed surface, or roaring over rugged bottoms ; hills crowned with orchards, and sloping their green sides to the sun ; valleys smiling with meadows and flowers, and shaded by groves ; ships winding up the inland waters, and breaking from among the hills ; towns, villages and

hamlets, indicative of rational life ; and the immense ocean, lost at a distance beneath the incumbent sky.

THESE scenes, my dear friend, it is true, are not peculiar to America. They are presented in every country, but on a smaller scale. *Here* nature seems to have gloried in her might, and to have put forth the highest efforts of creative energy. Such scenes are calculated to seize the imagination, and hurry it into poetical enthusiasm. This effect I have frequently witnessed, as produced upon American minds. Their poets frequently celebrate their rivers, mountains, cataracts and plains ; and there is no room to doubt, that at some future period, the *American Parnassus*, *Goverdhan*, *Illissus* and *Ganges*, will be equally consecrated in poetical story, as those famous mountains and rivers.

INDEED there is no deficiency of poetical talents in the nation at large, and the whole natural scenery of the country, tends to fill the mind with grand and sub-

lime conceptions, and in no small degree with sensations of beauty.

BUT sensations of exquisite beauty, are excited more powerfully in the country, which thou, my dear El Hassan, inhabitest, and which I still delight to call my own, than in this, or perhaps in any other. I would not suggest, that Hindustan is deficient in scenes of grandeur and sublimity.

OUR Ganges, Indus, and Barumpooter, traverse immense regions, and refresh the ocean with an unbounded profusion of water : Our Goverdhan lifts its top to the clouds, and the mountains of Kuttner and Gauts, overlook kingdoms, and separate nations. Our landscapes, are extensive, various and beautiful ; and the ocean appears to us, also, unmeasured and unconfined.

BUT exquisite beauty, rather than amazing grandeur, is the distinguishing mark of the scenes of Hindustan. Where, in America, shall we look for the *Lotos*, that splendid and elegant flower ; where

for the *Betel*, the *Sandal Grove*, and the precious "*musk deer*?" Where shall we find bowers equally fragrant?—Vallies equally verdant and vocal, and trees that distill balsamic gums? In what American clime do the birds tune their throats to equal melody, and exhibit a plumage equally splendid, and shapes and motions equally graceful? What American imagination has represented the God of Love, like the Hindu *Gania*, "with a bow of sugar-cane or ~~flowers~~, with a string of bees and five ~~arrows~~, each pointed with an Indian blossom of a heating quality?"—Where, in America, can we find efforts of imagination equally splendid and beautiful, and stores of language equally copious?

IN short, the English and Americans excel the Hindus in reason and taste; but the Hindus leave them far behind in flights of imagination, and beauty of expression. The Hindus, giving way to their native dispositions, sometimes indulge an exuberance of imagination, and a splendor of expression, too great to en-

sure the scrutiny of cool reason, and correct taste. How happy would that poet be, who should combine the imagination and copiousness of the Hindu, with the sublimity and correctness of the American !



Letter Eighth.

BELOVED EL HASSAN,

HAVING devoted my two last epistles, to a consideration of American poetry, I cannot resist the impulse, which I feel, to exhibit some specimens from the volumes of Hindu poetry ; that by a comparison thou mayest be able to judge of the propriety of the sentiments, which I have exhibited upon this subject.

THE following address to the Goddess SERASWATY, the patroness of imagination, and invention, of harmony and eloquence, and the wife of the God BRUMMA; abounds with beautiful imagery, and exquisite harmony of numbers.

“ Sweet grace of Brumma’s-bed!
Thou, when thy glorious Lord
Bade airy nothing breathe and bless his power,
Sat’st with illumin’d head,
And in sublime accord

Seven sprightly notes to hail the auspicious hour,
Led't from their secret bower.

They drank the air ; they came
With many a sparkling glance,
And knit the mazy dance,
Like yon bright orbs, that gird the solar flame,
Now parted, now combined,
Clear, as thy speech, and various, as thy mind.

Young passions at the sound
In shadowy forms arose
O'er hearts, yet uncreated, fure to reign ;
Joy, that o'erleaps all bounds,
Grief, that in silence grows,
Hope, that with honey blends the cup of pain,
Pale fear, and stern disdain,
Grim wrath's avenging hand,
Love nursed in dimple smooth,
That every pang can sooth.

Thee, her great parent, owns
All-ruling eloquence ;
That, like full Ganga, pours her stream divine,
Alarming States and Thrones ;
To fix the flying sense
Of words, thy daughters, by the varied line,
(Stupendous art !) was thine ;
Thine with the pointed reed,
To give primeval truth
Th' unfading bloom of youth,
And paint on deathless leaves high virtue's meed

Fair science, Heaven-born child,
And playful fancy on thy bosom smiled.

Who bids the fretted vene
Start from his deep repose,
And wakes to melody the quivering frame ?
What youth, with godlike mein,
O'er his bright shoulder throws [flame,
The verdant gourd, that swells with struggling
Nared, immortal name !
He, like his potent fire,
Creative spreads around
The mighty world of sound,
And calls from speaking wood etherial fire ;
While to th' accordant strings [sings.
Of boundless heavens and heavenly deeds he

But look ! the jocund hours
A lovelier scene display,
Young *Hindol* sportive in his golden swing,
High canopied with flowers,
While Ragnies ever gay
Toss the light cordage, and in cadence sing
The sweet return of spring."

THE personification of the "seven
sprightly notes," in the first verse, is bold,
picturesque and novel. "They drank the
air," is extremely expressive of the influ-
ence, which musical instruments, when
played, have upon the surrounding atmo-
sphere. The introduction of these airy

beings, into "the mazy dance," and the comparison of them with "yon bright orbs, that gird the solar flame," is a very happy mode of describing the apparent intricacy, but perfect harmony and regularity of fine music. The power, which music has to excite every passion, is finely described in the third verse, where the "young passions" are represented, as starting into being "at the sound." Their perpetual empire "o'er hearts yet uncreated," is elegantly told in a single line.—What can be more concise, and yet more glowing, than the description of the passions ?

"Hope that with honey blends the cup of pain:"

"Love nursed in dimple smooth,

"That every pang can sooth."

THE comparison of eloquence :

"That, like full Ganga, pours her stream divine,

"Alarming states and thrones,"

is in the highest degree noble and dignified.

The Invention of Letters is finely described in the fourth verse. The fifth ex-

hibits, with all the charms of varied numbers and appropriate imagery, the powers of Nared, in instrumental and vocal music.

“ He like his potent fire
 “ Creative, spreads around
 “ The mighty world of sound,
 “ And calls from speaking wood etherial fire :”

THE last verse is animated with the highest powers of personification. The *Ragnies*, or female passions, are represented with great propriety, as being “ ever gay,” and singing in cadence the sweet return of spring.”

THE hymn, a part of which I am now about to transcribe, addressed to *Narayna*, or the spirit of God, unites Asiatic beauty with European sublimity.

“ Spirit of spirits, who through every part
 Of space expanded, and of endless time,
 Beyond the reach of lab’ring thought sublime,
 Badst uproar into beauteous order start,
 Before Heaven was, thou art.

Ere spheres beneath us roll’d, or spheres above,
 Ere earth in firmamental æther hung,
 Thou sat’st alone, till tho’ thy mystic love

Things unexisting to existence sprung
And grateful descant sung.

Omniscient spirit, whose all-ruling power
Bids from each sense bright emanations beam,
Glow in the rainbow, sparkles in the stream,
Smiles in the bud, and glistens in the flower,
That crowns each vernal bower,
Sighs in the gale, and warbles in the throat
Of every bird, that hails the bloomy spring,
Or tells his love in many a liquid note,
Whilst envious artist touch the rival string,
Till rocks and forests ring ;
Breathes in rich fragrance from the Sandal grove,
Or where the precious Musk Deer playful rove,
In dulcet juice, from clust'ring fruit distills,
And burns salubrious in the tasteful clove :
Soft banks and verduous hills
Thy present influence fills ;
In air, in floods, in caverns, hills and plains,
Thy will inspirits all, thy sovereign Mava reigns.

Blue chrystal vault and elemental fires,
That in the ætherial fluid blaze, and breathe ;
Thou tossing main, whose snaky branches wreath
This pensile orb, with intertwisting gyres ;
Mountains, whose lofty spires,
Presumptuous, rear their summits to the skies,
And blend their em'rald hue with sapphire light,
Smooth meads and lawns, that glow with vary-
[ing dyes
Of dew-bespangled leaves and blossoms bright,

Hence ! vanish from my sight,
 Delusive pictures ! unsubstantial shows !
 My soul absorb'd, one only being knows,
 Of all perceptions one abundant source,
 Whence every object, every moment flows :
 Suns hence derive their force,
 Hence planets learn their course ;
 But suns and fading worlds I view no more ;
 God only I perceive ; God only I adore.

To point out all the beauties of the Poem, from which these stanzas are extracted, it would be necessary to descant upon every line ; for very rarely, I believe, has it been exceeded, either in glowing and excessive beauty, or amazing simplicity. Thou seest, my dear El Hassan, that the spirit of Hindu poetry, has not ceased to animate the breast of thy most faithful friend.



Letter Ninth.

BELOVED EL HASSAN,

THE attention, which I have lately paid to the subject of Hindu and American poetry, insensibly led me to a perusal of the *sacred books* of this country, which I had often heard commended, as containing the first instances of poetical grandeur and beauty. My labor has met its complete reward, in the pleasure which I have experienced from the discovery of several complete books of poetry in these sacred writings, and of numerous passages, scattered up and down, among prosaic performances, which, from this very circumstance, shine with peculiar beauty and splendor.

A SHORT pastoral Poem, intituled "The Song of Solomon," which, in its *literal* sense is a celebration of mutual love ; a reciprocal and highly elegant description of the graces and beauties of the lovers ;

and a rich poetical painting of the pastoral scenes, in which their loves are to be enjoyed. Considered in its literal meaning, it is a most elegant and charming pastoral. It has all the simplicity of nature, bold in language and sentiment. The persons of the lovers are beautiful, graceful and elegant, as they came from the hand of nature, without the decorations of splendid ornament, or the blandishments of artificial manners. Their sentiments are natural, glowing and tender; and their mutual affection and aspirations after each other's society, are warm and impassioned in the highest degree. The scenery is rich, brilliant and poetical. The objects mentioned are those, which charm every eye, and soothe every heart. The delicacies and beauties of nature are brought into one view, which, presents whatever can delight the sense, and charm the soul. The style is simple, but harmonious and elegant. With all these advantages, it cannot fail to interest a lover of nature, of whatever religion or country.

BUT these advantages are in the view of the Christians the least, which it has to boast. Their most learned and pious Brahmins agree in opinion, that this beautiful poem is merely a figurative expression of the reciprocal love of JESUS CHRIST and his CHURCH ; and as such they read it with the most devout sentiments, while the profane consider it, as being the effusion of the uxorious and poetical mind of Solomon, which delighted in the contemplation of love and poetry.

I CONFESS I am of opinion, that the *literal* meaning is not the *true* one. If it was really the daughter of love and poetry, why has it found a place in a collection of writings, whose principal object appears to be the subjugation of every natural propensity, to the dominion of the soul ? Thou, my friend, who hast often perused the pages of Hindu and Persian poetry, knowest, that many of the most important doctrines of the religions of Persia and Hindustan are conveyed in poetical numbers, and in a figurative

style. The literal meaning often appears voluptuous, but the mystical is holy and elevated.

ALL the charms of society, of love, and of wine, are drawn in to assist the fervor of religious affections ; and while the imagination of a voluptuary would revel in intellectual luxury, the religious mind soars on the wings of rapture to the great First Cause.

BUT which ever opinion may be correct, with respect to the Song of Solomon, I was instantly struck by the similarity of the design, to that of the *Gitagovinda* of our charming lyric poem *Jayadeva*.

THIS, thou wilt remember, is a *pastoral drama*, drawn from the tenth book of the Bhagavet, in which are celebrated the loves of CHRISHNA (called also by several other names) and RADHA ; or, as our Brahmins interpret it, "the reciprocal attraction between the divine goodness and the human soul." Thou, my dear El Hassan, hast been present with me at *Calinga*, the reputed native place of Jay-

adeva ; where the people “celebrate in honour of him an annual jubilee, passing a whole night in representing his drama, and in singing his beautiful songs.”

THERE we have heard the mellifluous numbers of this delightful poet ; while the moon has listened in the heavens, and the songsters of night have sung responsively from the groves. The poetical painting of the Gitagovinda is rich and splendid. The colors are glowing, yet tempered with that mild radiance, which soothes, and relieves, while it delights the eye. The descriptions are particular, and therefore precise. The tree, the flower, and the rivulet, stand forth to the eye ; every object is painted in its own appropriate colors ; there is no unmeaning rhapsody and obscure daubing ; but every part is perfect in itself, and maintains a just relation to the whole. The characters, particularly the two principal ones, viz. CHRISHNA and RADHA, although singular, and out of life (as indeed that of Crishna ought to be, since he is represented, as a God)

are consistent with themselves, and carry such marks of identity, that they are instantly known, wherever they occur.

THERE is one remarkable difference between the Hindu and American taste. The Hindus "have no idea, that any thing, which is natural, can be offensively obscene." Hence the images, statues and paintings of Hindustan, exhibit the human person without reserve. Those parts, which modesty, or guilt, induces all civilized, and most barbarous nations, to conceal, are by them exposed, in their monuments of sculpture and painting, with no more scruple, than the hands, the arms, and the face.

THIS practice, which may be indicative of great purity, or excessive corruption, originates from a set of feelings and ideas, which exert a kindred influence over every thing, which the Hindu says, or does. Hence, in our poetry, there is often found a luxuriancy of description, which, to nations who have been accustomed to a dif-

ferent course of thinking upon these objects, appears extremely wanton and voluptuous.

THE Gitagovinda of Jayadeva falls under this imputation, in a certain degree ; although those instances, in which it would be censured by the American taste, are probably less censurable, than the greater number of parallel instances from other Hindu and Persian poets. In order, my dear El Hassan, that thou mayest be able to form a comparison between the famous Gitagovinda and the Song of Solomon, I shall, in a future epistle, extract some passages from each ; that by seeing specimens of both these favorite poems together, thou mayest be able to form a parallel or a contrast, between them. But I must be allowed to extract more or less copiously, as the feelings of the moment may dictate ; for, upon poetical subjects, I often throw the reins upon the neck of fancy, and suffer myself to be hurried, wherever it leads. Reason however is always at hand to curb the excesses of passion, and

the wanderings of imagination. With
unceasing affection, I am, my dear El
Hassan, thy faithful Friend.



 Letter Tenth.

PRaise TO GANESA,

BELOVED EL HASSAN,

MAY the Goddeſs *Seraſwaty*, the patroness of imagination and invention, of harmony and eloquence ; may the musical *Kriſhen*, with the nine tuneful *Gopia* ; may the quiver-bearing God *Cama*, with the beautiful *Ragnies* ; may all the powers of love and poetry, and may the immortal *BRUMMA* himself, second, with their most auspicious influences, our humble attempts to compare the literature and poetry of distant and dissimilar countries.

I REMARKED in my last epistle, that both the *Gitagovinda* and *Solomon's Song*, have, in all probability, a mystical meaning. This opinion I still believe to be correct ; but with this mystical meaning, thou wilt perceive, my dear friend, that I have at present no concern. My object is to glance at the two works in the char-

after of poems. As such I shall consider them, and leave the mystical meaning to be explained and enforced by the holy Brahmins, to whom this office belongs.

THERE is certainly no impropriety in thus considering them ; for the poetical garb, in which the writers have thought proper to convey their sentiments, may form, with the highest propriety, a subject of critical eulogium, whatever recondite meaning may lie concealed beneath so fascinating an exterior.

THE following verses are in my opinion highly beautiful. They are taken from the 2d Chapter of Solomon's Song :—
“I am the rose of Sharon, and the lilly of the valley. As the lilly among thorns, so is my love among the daughters. As the apple tree among the trees of the wood, so is my beloved among the sons. I sat 'down under his shadow with great delight ; and his fruit was sweet to my taste. He brought me to the banqueting house, and his banner over me was love. Stay me with flaggons, comfort we with

apples ; for I am sick of love. His left hand is under my head, and his right hand doth embrace me."

THE following verses are distinguished by a singular animation of sentiment, and melody of numbers :

" THE voice of my beloved ! behold he cometh, leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills. My beloved spake, and said unto me, rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away."

WHAT can be more beautiful, than the lines which follow ?—" For lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone ; the flowers appear on the earth ; the time of the singing *of birds* is come ; and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land ; until the day break, and the shadows flee away, turn my beloved, and be thou like a roe or a young hart upon the mountains of Bethel." The mutual eulogium, which follows, is in the highest degree rich and glowing :

“BEHOLD thou *art* fair, my love! Behold thou *art* fair! Thou hast dove’s eyes within thy locks. Thy lips are, like a thread of scarlet, and thy speech is comely. Thy two breasts are, like two young roes, that are twins, which feed among the lillies. Until the day break and the shadows flee away, I will get me to the mountain of Myrrh, and to the hill of Frankincense. Thou *art* all fair my love; *there* is not spot in thee. Come with me from Lebanon, my spouse, with me from Lebanon. Look from the top of Amana, from the top of Shenir and Hermon, from the lion’s dens, from the mountains of the Leopards.

“THOU hast ravished my heart, my sister, my spouse; thou hast ravished my heart with one of thine eyes. Thy lips, O my spouse, drop, as the honeycomb. Honey and milk are under thy tongue; and the smell of thy garments is like the smell of Lebanon.

“AWAKE, O north wind, and come thou south; blow upon my garden, that

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the spices thereof may flow out. Let my beloved come into his garden, and eat his pleasant fruits."

THE reply is not less tender, ardent and poetical. "I am come into my garden, my sister, my spouse. I have gathered my myrrh with my spices; I have eaten my honeycomb with my honey; I have drank my wine with my milk. Eat, O friends; drink, yea, drink abundantly, O my beloved."

"MY beloved is white and ruddy, the chiefest among ten thousand. His head *is*, as the most fine gold; his locks *are* bushy, *and* black, as a raven. His eyes *are*, as *the eyes* of doves by the rivers of waters, washed with milk, and fitly set. His cheeks *are*, as a bed of spices, as sweet flowers; his lips like lillies dropping sweet-smelling myrrh. His hands *are*, as gold rings set with the bery; his belly is bright ivory overlaid with sapphires. His legs *are*, as pillars of marble set upon sockets of fine gold. His countenance *is*, as Lebanon, excellent, as the cedars. His

nouth is most sweet ; yea, he is altogether lovely. This is my beloved, and is my friend, O daughters of Jerufalem."

THE prevailing characteristics of this Poem are delicacy, richness and beauty ; but the following passages partake in no small degree of grandeur :

" THOU art beautiful, O my love, as Tirzah ; comely, as Jerufalem ; terrible, as *an army* with banners.

" WHO is she, that looketh forth, as the morning ; fair, as the moon, clear, as the sun, and terrible, as *an army* with banners,"

AGAIN the Poem returns to its usual beauty and elegance.

" HOW beautiful are thy feet with shoes, O Princes' daughters ! Thy two breasts are, like two young roes, that are twins. Thine head upon thee is like Carmel, and the hair of thine head like purple ; the king is held in the galleries. How fair and how pleasant art thou, O love, for delights ! This thy stature is, like to a palm

tree, and thy breast to clusters *of grapes*.
I said, I will go up to the palm tree ; I will
take hold of the boughs thereof. Now al-
so thy breasts shall be, as clusters of the
vine, and the smell of thy nose, like ap-
ples ; and the roof of thy mouth, like the
best wine, for my beloved, that goeth
down sweetly, causing the lips of those,
that are asleep to speak. Let us get up
early to the vineyards ; let us see if the
vine flourish, *whether* the tender grape
appear, and the pomegranates put forth ;
for there will I give thee my loves.
The mandrakes give a smell, and at
our gates *are* all manner of pleasant
fruits, new and old, *which* I have laid
up for thee, O my beloved."

THESE, my dear El Haffan, are some
specimens of this beautiful Poem. I could
not have transcribed any part, which is
not fraught with peculiar beauty. In-
deed, if I had gratified my own incli-
nation, I should have transcribed the
whole. In my next epistle, I shall pro-
duce some specimens of the Gitago-

vinda, which I fear will suffer by the comparison. In the estimation of its merits, the peculiarities of the Hindu taste should be kept constantly in view.



Letter Eleventh.

**SALUTATION TO GANESA,
BELOVED EL HASSAN, FRIEND OF MY HEART,**

AS the pilgrim, who having traversed immense deserts, where no verdure springs to cheer the eye, and not a flower perfumes the scorching winds; arriving at length in some green vale, where rivulets are enamelled with banks of flowers, trees drop balsamic gums, birds sing in the thickets, and fragrance floats in the wind, stops a while; and, enchanted by such various beauty, lingers till evening; so I, having arrived in the Elysian regions of poetry and imagination, not content to stay an hour, and then depart, still love to ramble into every grove, and to trace the beauties of every prospect.

As my last contained some of the many beauties of Solomon's Song, it now remains to exhibit some specimens of the

Gitagovinda. Thou, my friend, wilt remember, that the subject of this Poem is the loves of RADHA and CHRISHNA. Chrishna is called through the poem by several other names, as *Heri*, *Madhava*, the vanquisher of the demon *Cesh*, the destroyer of *Canfa*, &c.

THE introductory lines of the Poem inform the reader of the subject.*

“THE firmament is obscured by clouds ; the woodlands are black with *Amala* trees. That youth, who roves in

* The *story* of the following poem is simply this. CHRISHNA or “the divine goodness,” having descended from heaven, wanders about in the forest, at the twilight, waiting for RADHA or “the human soul, to come forth *voluntarily*, and solicit him to enter her cottage, and share its hospitality.

Radha delaying to go forth, Chrishna, offended, betakes himself to those, who are more anxious for his presence.

Radha, alarmed and almost in despair, seeks the offended God a long time in the forest. She seeks him long in vain ; but at length is admitted to his embraces ; although this is the consummation of her wishes, still she exhibits the coyness and reluctance of beauty resolving to submit, yet loth to yield its independence.

The ardor of Chrishna represents the ready disposition of the “divine goodness” to be reconciled to “the human soul.”

The “officious friend” of Radha, probably represents the combined force of an awakened conscience, and an alarmed imagination.

It is necessary to remember that both Chrishna and Radha are called frequently by other names ; but they are easily distinguished by their actions and sentiments.

the forest will be fearful in the gloom of night. Go my daughter, bring the wanderer home to my rustic mansion. Such was the command of Nanda, the fortunate herdsman ; and hence arose the love of RADHA and MADHAVA, who sported on the banks of Yamana, or hastened eagerly to the secret bower."

OBEDIENT to the command of her father, RADHA goes out into the forest in search of CRISHNA. The poem then proceeds.

"RADHA fought him long in vain, and her thoughts were confounded by the fever of desire. She roved in the vernal morning among the twining *Vasantis*, covered with soft blossoms ; when a damsel thus addressed her with youthful hilarity. "The gale, that has wantoned round the beautiful clove plants, breathes now from the hills of *Maylaya*. The *Tamala*, with leaves dark and odorous, claims a tribute from the musk, which it vanquishes. See the bunches of *Patali* flowers filled with bees, like the quiver of *Smara*, full of

shafts; while the *Amra* tree, with blooming tresses, is embraced by the gay creeper *Atimucta*, and the blue streams of *Tamuna*,* wind round the groves of *Vrindavan*. In this charming season, which gives pain to separated lovers, young *HERI* sports and dances with a company of damsels."

THE jealous RADHA gave no answer; and soon after, her officious friend, perceiving the foe of MURA in the forest, eager for the rapturous embraces of the herdsmen's daughters, with whom he was dancing, thus again addressed his forgotten mistress.

"WITH a garland of wild flowers, descending even to the yellow mantle, that girds his azure limbs, distinguished by smiling cheeks and by ear-rings, that sparkle, as he plays, *Heri exults in the assembly of amorous damsels*. One of them presses him with her swelling breast; while she warbles with exquisite melody. Another, affected by a glance from his eye, stands meditating on the lotos of his face. A third, on pretence of whispering a secret in his ear, approaches his temples

* An Indian river.

and kisses them with ardor. One seizes his mantle, and draws him towards her, pointing to the bower on the banks of *Yamuna*; where elegant *Vanjulas* interweave their branches. He applauds another, who dances in the sportive circle ; whilst her bracelets ring, as she beats time with her palms. Now he caresses one, and kisses another, smiling on a third with complacency ; and now he chafes her, whose beauty has most allured him. Thus the wanton *Heri* frolicks, in the season of sweets, among the maids of *Vraja*, who rush to his embraces, as if he were pleasure itself, assuming a human form ; and one of them, under a pretext of hymning his divine perfections, whispers in his ears “ thy lips, my beloved, are nectar.”

“ *RADHA* remains in the forest ; but resenting the promiscuous passion of *HERI*, retires to a bower of twining plants ; and there falling languid on the ground, she thus addresses her female companion.”

HERE follows a charming strain of love, resentment and forgiveness, which

the poet puts into the mouth of *RADHA*. The following are among the finest passages.

“ *THOUGH* he take recreation in my absence, and smile on all around him; yet my soul remembers him, whose locks are decked with the plumes of peacocks, resplendent with many colored moons; and whose mantle gleams with a dark blue cloud, illumined with rainbows. Bring him, who formerly slept on my bosom, to recline with me on a green bed of leaves just gathered; while his lip sheds dew, and my arms enfold him. Bring him, who formerly drew me by the locks to his embrace, to repose with me; whose feet tinkle, as they move, with rings of gold and of gems; whose loosened zone sounds, as it falls; and whose limbs are slender and flexible, as the creeping plant. Soft is the gale, which breathes over yon clear pool, and expands the clustering blossoms of the voluble *Afoea*. Soft, yet grievous to me, is the absence of the foe of *MADHU*. Delightful are the flowers of

Amra trees, on the mountain top; while the murmuring bees pursue their voluptuous toil. Delightful, yet afflicting to me, O friend, is the absence of the youthful *Cesava*."

REMORSE, in the mean time, seizes the breast of CRISHNA, whom the poet here calls "the destroyer of CANSA." He leaves the wanton shepherdesses, begins a fruitless search for RADHA; and seating himself in a bower, pours forth his lamentations.

"SHE is departed. She saw me, no doubt, furrounded by the wanton shepherdesses. *Woe is me! she feels a sense of injured honor, and is departed in wrath.* I seem to behold her face, with eye brows contracting themselves through her just resentment. It resembles a fresh lotos, over which two black bees are fluttering. Grant me but a sight of thee, O lovely RADHA, for my passion torments me. I am not the terrible MAHESA. A garland of water-lillies, with subtil threads, decks my shoulders; not serpents with twisted

folds ; the blue petals of the lotos glitter on my neck ; not the azure gleam of poison. Powdered sandal wood is sprinkled on my limbs ; not pale ashes. O God of Love, wound me not again ; hold not in thy hand that shaft, armed with an *Amra* flower ! My heart is already pierced by arrows from RADHA's eyes, black and keen, as those of an antelope. Her eyes are full of shafts ; her eye-brows are bows. I meditate on her delightful embrace, on the ravishing glances darted from her eye, on the fragrant lotos of her mouth, on her nectar-dropping speech, on her lips, ruddy, as the berries of the BIMBA. Yet even my fixed meditation, on such an assemblage of charms, increases, instead of alleviating the miseries of separation."

THE female friend of RADHA presents herself before CRISHNA, and relates in charming strains the destruction of her friend. I select only a few passages.

"SHE declares the gale of Malaya to be venom, and the sandal trees, through

which it has breathed, to have been the haunt of serpents. Thus, O *MADHAVA*, *is she afflicted in thy absence with the pain, which love's dart has occasioned ; her soul is fixed on thee.* Her face is like a water-lilly, veiled in the dew of tears ; and her eyes appear like moons eclipsed. Herself (alas ! through thy absence) is become a timid roe ; and love is the tiger, who springs on her, like *YAMA*, the genius of death. Her sighs form a breeze long extended ; and burn her, like the flame, which reduced *CANDARPA* to ashes. She throws around her eyes, like blue water-lillies with broken stalks, dropping lucid streams. Even her bed of tender leaves appears, in her sight, like a kindled fire. The palm of her hand supports her aching temple, motionless, as the crescent rising at eve."

CRISHNA then replies to the maid. "Here have I chosen my abode ; go quickly to *BADHA* ; soothe her with my message, and conduct her hither."

SHE hastens back and addresses her companion in the following very beautiful strains.

“WHILST a sweet breeze from the hills of *Malaya*, comes wafting on his plumes the young god of desire ; while many a flower points his extended petals to pierce the bosom of separated lovers, *the deity, crowned with sylvan blossoms, laments, O friend, in thy absence.* Even the dewy rays of the moon burn him. When the bees murmur softly, he covers his ears. He quits his radiant place for the wild forests; where he sinks on a bed of cold clay, and frequently mutters thy name. *Having bound his locks with forest flowers, he hastens to your arbor ; where a soft gale breathes over the banks of Yamuna.* With a mind languid, as a drooping wing, feeble as a trembling leaf, he doubtfully expects thy approach ; and timidly looks on the path, which thou must tread. O friend, hastily cast over thee thy azure mantle, and run to the gloomy bower. The reward of thy speed, O thou, who sparklest, like lightning, will be to shine on the blue bosom of MURARI ; which resembles a vernal cloud, decked with a string of pearls, like a flock of white water-birds flutter-

ing in the air. The bright beamed God sinks in the west. The blackness of the night is increased; and the passionate imagination of GOVINDA has acquired additional gloom. Seize the moment of delight in the place of assignation with the son of DEVAGE."

BUT the maid, perceiving that RADHA could not move from the place through excessive debility, hastens back, and describes to CRISHNA the situation of his beloved.

"*SHE mourns, O sovereign of the world, in her verdant bower. She repeats again and again the name of HERI; and catching at a dark blue cloud, strives to embrace it; saying, "it is my beloved, who approaches."* If a leaf but quiver, she supposes thee arrived. She spreads her couch. She forms in her mind a hundred modes of delight. Yet if thou come not to the bower, she must die this night through excessive anguish. By this time the moon spread a net of beams over the groves of Vrindavan; and looked, like a

drop of liquid sandal on the face of the sky; which smiled like a beautiful damsel; while its orb with many spots betrayed, as it were, a consciousness of guilt, in having often attended amorous maids to the loss of their family honor. The moon, with a black fawn couched on its disk, advanced in its nightly course; but *MADHAVA* had not yet advanced to the bower of *RADHA*, who thus bewailed his delay, with notes of varied lamentation."

THE remainder of the Gitagovinda must be deferred to the next epistle of thy friend.



Letter Twelfth.

BELOVED EL HASSAN,

I HAVE not yet done with the *Gita-govinda* of *Jayadeva*. Having dipped into this elegant Poem, I am not willing to leave it, until I have taken a glance at all its principal beauties. Thou wilt remember, that we left RADHA about to bewail the delay of CHRISHNA. Among other pathetic sentiments, she utters the following :

“ THE appointed moment is come ; but HERI, alas ! comes not to the grove. The coolness of this vernal night gives me pain instead of refreshment. Some happier damsel enjoys my beloved ; whilst I, alas ! am looking at the gems of my bracelets, which are blackened by the flames of my passion.”

SEEING her damsel return without CHRISHNA, her jealousy rises to phrenzy ;

and the poet makes her behold, in imagination, her lover in the arms of a rival.

“YES, in habiliments becoming the war of love, and with tresses, waving like flowery banners, *a damsel, more alluring than RADHA, enjoys the conqueror of MADHU.* Her form is transfigured by the touch of her divine lover. Her garland quivers over her swelling bosom. Her face, like the moon, is graced with clouds of dark hair, and trembles while she quaffs the nectareous dew of his lips; she floats on the waves of desire; and closes her eyes, dazzled with the blaze of approaching Cama. See how he kisses the lip of my rival, and imprints on her forehead an ornament of pure musk, black as the young antelope on the lunar orb! Now, like the husband of RETI, he fixes white blossoms on her dark locks, where they gleam like flashes of lightning among the curled clouds. On her breasts, like two firmaments, he places a string of gems, like a radiant constellation. Mark, how my soul, attracted by his irresistible charms,

bursts from its mortal frame, and rushes to mix with its beloved."

"PIERCED by the arrows of love, she passed the night in the agonies of despair; and at early dawn thus rebuked her lover, whom she saw laying prostrate before her, and imploring her forgiveness.

"ALAS! *alas! go Madhava; depart, O Cesavi; speak not the language of guile; follow her, O lotus-eyed God, follow her, who dispels thy care.*"

HAVING thus inveighed against her beloved, she sat, overwhelmed in grief, and silently meditated on his charms;—when the damsel softly addressed her :

"HE is gone. The light air has wafted him away. *Continue not, resentful woman, thy indignation against the beautiful Madhava. Why shouldest thou render vain those round smooth vases, ample and ripe as the fruit of yon Tala tree? How often have I said, forsake not the blooming Heri!*"

CHRISHNA, after a short absence, returns, and by his eloquence, his fervor and praise, entirely appeases the anger of *Radha*. Among other impassioned sentiments, he says :

“ THY lips are a *Bandhujiva* flower ; the lustre of the *Madhuca* beams on thy cheek ; thine eyes out-shine the blue *Lotos* ; thy nose is a bud of the *Tila* ; the *Cunda* blossom yields to thy teeth : Thus the flower-shafted God, borrows from thee the points of his darts, and subdues the universe. Surely thou descendest from Heaven, O, slender damsel, attended by a company of youthful goddesses ; and all their beauties are collected in thee.”

“ HE spake ; and seeing her appeased by his homage, flew to his bower, clad in a gay mantle. The night now veiled all visible objects ; and the damsel thus exhorted *Radha*, while she decked her with beaming ornaments.

“ *Follow, gentle Radhica, follow the foe of Madhu.* His discourse was elegantly com-

posed of soft phrases ; he prostrated himself at thy feet ; and he now hastens to his delightful couch, by yon grove of branching *Vanjulas*. The night now dresses in habiliments fit for secrecy, the many damsels, who hasten to their places of assignation ; she sets off with blackness their beautiful eyes ; fixes dark *Tamala* leaves behind their ears ; decks their locks with the deep azure of water-lillies, and sprinkles musk on their panting bosoms. The nocturnal sky, black as the touchstone, tries now the gold of their affection, and is marked with rich lines from the flashes of their beauty, in which they surpass the brightest *Cashmirians*."

"RADHA, thus incited, tripped through the forest ; but shame overpowered her, when by the light of innumerable gems, on the arms, the feet, and the neck of her beloved, she saw him at the door of his flowery mansion. Then her damsel again addressed her with ardent exultation ;

"ENTER, sweet *Radha*, the bower of *Heri* : Seek delight, O thou, whose bo-

from laughs with the foretaste of happiness. Enter, sweet *Radha*, the bower, graced with a bed of *Aśoka* leaves : Seek delight, O thou, whose garland leaps with joy upon thy breast. Enter, sweet *Radha*, the bower illumined with gay blossoms : Seek delight, O thou, whose limbs far excel them in softness. Enter, O *Radha*, the bower made cool and fragrant, by gales from the woods of *Malaya* : Seek delight, O thou, whose amorous lays are softer than breezes. Enter, O *Radha*, the bower spread with leaves of twining creepers : Seek delight, O thou, whose arms have been long inflexible. Enter, O, *Radha*, the bower which resounds with the murmur of honey-making bees : Seek delight, O thou, whose embrace yields more exquisite sweetness."

" SHE ended ; and *Radha*, with timid joy, darting her eyes on *Govinda*, while she musically sounded the rings of her ankles, and the bells of her zone, entered the mystic bower of her only beloved.—*There she beheld her Madhava, who delighted in her alone ; who so long had sighed for*

her embrace ; and whose eyes then gleamed with excessive rapture. His heart was agitated by her sight, as the waves of the deep are affected by the lunar orb. His azure breast glittered with pearls of unblemished lustre, like the full bed of the Cercean *Yamuna*, interspersed with curls of white foam. From his graceful waist, flowed a pale yellow robe, which resembled the golden dust of the water-lilly, scattered over its blue petals. His passion was inflamed by the glances of her eyes, which played like a pair of water-birds, with azure plumage, that sport near a full-blown *Lotos*, on a pool, in the season of dew. Bright ear-rings, like two suns, displayed, in full expansion, the flowers of his cheeks and lips, which glistered with the liquid radiance of smiles. His locks, interwoven with blossoms, were like a cloud variegated with moonbeams ; and on his forehead, shone a circle of odorous oil, extracted from the sandal of *Malaya*, like the moon just appearing on the dusky horizon ; while his body seemed in a flame, from the blaze of unnumbered gems. Tears of trans-

port gushed in a stream, from the eyes of *Radha*, and their watry glances beamed on her best beloved. Even flame, which before had taken its abode in their dark pupils, was itself ashamed, and departed, when the fawn-eyed *Radha*, gazed on the brightened face of *Cbrißna*, while she passed by the soft edge of his couch, and the bevy of his attendant nymphs, pretending to strike the gnats from their cheeks, in order to conceal their smiles, warily retired from his bower."

"GOVINDA, seeing his beloved cheerful and serene, her lips sparkling with smiles, and her eye speaking desire, thus eagerly addressed her, while she carelessly reclined on the leafy bed, strewn with soft blossoms.

"Set the lotos of thy foot on this azure bosom; and let this couch be victorious over all, who rebel against love. Speak, but one gentle word; bid nectar drop from the bright moon of thy mouth. O! suffer me to quaff the liquid bliss of those lips; restore with their water of life

thy slave, who has long been lifeless; whom the fire of separation has consumed. O ! let affliction cease ; and let ecstasy drown the remembrance of past sorrow."

" IN THE morning she rose, disarrayed; and her eyes betrayed a night without slumber ; when the yellow robed god, who gazed on her with transport, thus meditated on her charms in his heavenly mind."

" THOUGH her locks be diffused at random, though the lustre of her lips be faded, though her garland and zone be fallen from their enchanting stations, and though she hide their places with her hands, looking toward me with bashful silence ; yet, even thus disarranged, she fills me with extatic delight."

" BUT *Radha*, preparing to array herself, before the company of nymphs could see her confusion, spake thus with exultation to her obsequious lover.

" PEACE, O son of *Yadhu*, with fingers cooler, than sandal wood, place a cir-

clet of musk on this breast. Place, my darling, the glossy powder, which would make the blackest bee envious, on this eye, whose glances are keener than arrows, darted by the husband of *Reti*.— Now replace, O tender hearted, the loose ornaments of my vesture ; and refix the golden bells of my girdle on their destined station, which resembles those hills, where the God with five shafts, who destroyed *Sambar*, keeps his elephant ready for battle.” “ While she spake, the heart of *Tadhava* triumphed ; and, obeying her sportful behests, he placed musky spots on her bosom and forehead, dyed her temples with radiant hues, embellished her eyes with additional blackness, decked her braided hair and her neck with fresh garlands ; and tied on her wrists the loosened bracelets, on her ankles the beamy rings, and around her waist the zone of bells, that sounded with ravishing melody.”

“ WHATEVER is delightful in the modes of music, whatever is divine in meditations on *Viṣṇu*, whatever is exquisite in the sweet art of love, whatever is grace-

ful in the fine strains of poetry ; all that, let the happy and the wise learn from the songs of *Jayadeva*, whose soul is united with the foot of *Narayan*."

THUS, my dear friend, thou hast before thee some of the most striking beauties of *Solomon's Song*, and of the *Gitagovinda*. The latter is decked with all the exquisite beauty, and dazzling splendor of Indian painting ; written in a country, where scenes of beauty are more vivid and luxuriant than in any other ; and wrought up by the finest efforts of Hindu imagination. But it is not surprising, that its beauties should now and then become too intense, for the taste of a more northern clime. But it must always command the admiration of every lover of nature ; whether he drew his first breath on the banks of the *Ganges*, or the *Hudson*. It must be confessed, that the beauties of the *Song of Solomon*, if they are not equally glowing, are more chaste, both in morals and taste, than those of the latter.

THAT the great *Brumma*, by the delicious strains of poetry, contained in the *Gitagovinda*, may allure our minds to a contemplation of "the reciprocal attraction between the Divine Goodness and the Human Soul," is the ardent wish of thy most faithful friend.



Letter Thirteenth.

BELOVED EL HASSAN,

THANKS to the Goddess *Serafwaty*, thy friend still lives, to observe the manners, and investigate the ideas of nations remote from his beloved Hindustan. In some of my former letters, I have delineated some features of the modern philosophy. I met yesterday with a philosopher of this school, whose sentiments were entirely novel to me. He was a grave man about forty years old, affected the character of a philosopher, and talked much in abstract and undefined language.

I MET him walking alone upon the banks of the SCHUYLKILL. His appearance attracted my attention; and finding him courteous in his manners, I requested the pleasure of his society in a walk to and fro along the banks of the river.

HE opened his remarks by an elaborate eulogium upon the progress of repub-

licanism ; which word, as I afterwards found, means *modern philosophy*. “ Thrones (said he) are tottering ; kings tremble at the progress of liberty ; nobles and priests are conspiring, but in vain, to prop the altar and the throne. They must and they will fall, never to rise again.

“ REPUBLICANISM has made a glorious progress in America. A philosopher and philanthropist is in the chair of supreme magistracy, and the minions of monarchy and aristocracy are skulking into private life.

“ BUT what (continued he) signifies this, so long as a distempered and unnatural state of civilization, continues to corrupt the original innocence, and cramp the native freedom of man ? I sigh for the primitive state of nature, and confidently trust, that this century will see it restored. The earth, the great parent of man, beast, fowl and herb, has been wickedly appropriated to the use of individuals. Instead of ranging at large over the ample face of nature, I am now forbidden to enter my

neighbor's field, lest I should tread down his grafs. I am confined by fences to a narrow road, and compelled to travel in a prescribed track."

SIR, (rejoined I) do you not travel with infinitely more ease in an established road, usually the shortest distance between the places, which it connects, than you would over mountains and crags, and through morasses, deserts and defiles? And does not the earth, when inclosed and cultivated, produce an hundred times more food, than when overrun by beasts of the forest, and covered with heath and jungle? Does not a cultivated country also exhibit to the eye a landscape, beyond comparison more beautiful, than the barren wilderness of nature?

"BUT, (said the Philosopher,) this is no compensation for the loss of my liberty; the liberty of rambling just where wild unheeding fancy leads.

"HOW oppressive is the whole system of laws, by which this arbitrary assumption of property is defended. Why should

my neighbor ride an elegant English courser, breathing fire from his nostrils, and shaking the earth with his tread ; while I, a better man than he, because a greater Philosopher, must travel on foot ? and should I take his horse for my own use, I must swing on the gallows, or toil in the mines.

“ KINGS, nobles and priests, conspiring against the liberty of man, have enacted systems of laws, on purpose to entangle the unwary. There is no crime, where there is no law. A pure state of nature, where man is innocent, does not know a crime ; because crimes have never been here created by the institution of laws. What, but a distempered civilization, has rendered it criminal to obey the dictates of nature in promiscuous concubinage ? Why should I be confined to one woman, while the whole animal world beside, obey the impulse of passion, and seek gratification, wherever it may be found ? Why should I be compelled to support and educate those beings, whom my physical energies, operating ac-

according to the established laws of nature, without the assistance of mind, have produced? I am no more accountable for their existence, than the mountain for the cedar, which it bears, or the stream for the wheel, which it turns. As therefore the cedar is cut down, and the mountain does not mourn; the wheel is removed, but the stream still continues to flow; so those beings may be born, grow up, and die without any claim to my assistance, and with no title to my love, or my grief."

MR. Philosopher, rejoined I, your doctrines are new, and I must therefore be indulged my doubts; as no one can at once eradicate established prejudices, or banish old modes of thinking.

IF your neighbor's superior industry, or good fortune, enables him to ride an English courser, while your indolence, or untoward fate, obliges you to walk, why should not laws be made to secure to him the fruit of his industry, and the gifts of fortune? Your invectives against kings,

priests and nobles are unfounded. Have crimes been less frequent in republics than in monarchies? Let Rome, Athens, Carthage, Venice and modern France, answer the question.

YOUR assertion, that where there is no law, there is no crime, is false. Do not murders, maimings, and rapes, occur more frequently in the state of society, which is called the *state of nature*, than in any other? And do they cease to be crimes, because not forbidden by positive laws?

I AM astonished, that a Philosopher should be willing, at a single stroke, to destroy nearly all the virtue, and the happiness of life. For why should one man be permitted the use of an hundred women, when one will answer all the purposes of his existence? Abolish the institution of marriage, and where would be that social virtue, that mild, but constant philanthropy, which springs from the most delightful of all connections, the union of congenial souls?

“Where heart meets heart, reciprocally soft,
Each others pillow to repose divine.”

WHAT would remain in its stead, but brutal lust, emaciating the body, and corrupting the mind?

IN the sharp contest for the finest women; for women would then become an article of luxury, what contentions, what public murders, what private assassinations would ensue! How wretched must the women themselves be, thrown from paramour to paramour, without a dwelling, and without a protector! How would their hearts sink in that most trying hour, when about to give *life* to a rational being, their *own* hangs suspended on a thread!

BUT how, Mr. Philosopher, can you say, that you are not obliged to afford protection and support to the being whom you have begotten? The mountain, it is true, produces the cedar, and the stream turns the wheel, according to the established laws of vegetation and motion; for in them resides no volition. But you are

a rational being, and in yielding to the impulse of nature, are able to foresee the consequence of your agency. Who shall maintain the helpless little stranger, if you do not ? Cast upon the wide world, and unrecognized by him, who gave it being, the infant must perish, unless sustained by the hand of maternal care, or by the voluntary attentions of strangers.

THE Philosopher paused, and stroking his beard, as if preparing for another display of his powers, proceeded to condemn civilized life, and to eulogize the state of nature. But the sequel of our conversation must be deferred, till the next epistle of thy friend.



Letter Fourteenth.

DEARLY BELOVED EL HASSAN,

THE Philosopher proceeded.—“The restraints of marriage are intolerable. The social affections, of which you speak, are narrow and selfish. How much more worthy of a philosopher is that expanded philanthropy, which embraces, within the wide circle of its love, the Greenlander, half buried in his snows, and the naked savage, panting at the line? Low, debased souls, corrupted by civilization, may seek for objects of charity in the highways and cottages; but let me tell you, such beings can never become *Philosophers*. Philosophical philanthropy extends its affections even to other planets, and to other systems; and considers the whole universe, as one great republic.”

HERE the Philosopher, assuming a loftier step, looked me full in the face, while his countenance expressed supreme satisfaction.

WHAT good, Mr. Philosopher, (said I) will your philanthropy do to the inhabitants of distant systems, which the most rapid comet can hardly reach, in his amazing revolution of a thousand years? What inhabitant of *Herschel's* planet, which our finest telescopes can hardly render visible, will ever know of the existence of the Philadelphia Philosopher? What *Greenlander*, or native of *Borneo*, will ever hear one of your philanthropic sighs, or listen, as I do, to the eloquence of your tongue? Indeed, sir, we must seek objects of charity within our reach. We must relieve the unfortunate mendicant in the streets, and cheer the wretched inhabitants of the hut of poverty. Let *Kamtschatka* and *Caffraria* relieve the distresses of their own inhabitants; and let *us* cherish the country, which gave us birth, and do good to the little circle around us.

“YOUR mind (replied the Philosopher,) is not sufficiently enlightened to feel the sublimity of my doctrines. I therefore pardon your prejudices, while I strive to remove them. It is this distempered state

of civilization, which has given you these false conceptions. Could you only see a society of men in the simple state of nature, you would be proud to throw off your false refinements, and resort to the amiable society of uncorrupted men."

IN the farther *India*, Mr. Philosopher, (said I) on the borders of the kingdom of *Pegu*, I have seen a race of men, almost in that amiable state of nature, the contemplation of which produces such raptures in your mind ; entirely naked, even in those parts which nature bids us conceal ; destitute of homes and habitations ; almost without language ; ignorant of agriculture, and subsisting upon berries, and the flesh of animals torn raw from their bones, and quivering between their teeth as they devour it ; without property, without laws, and without decency ; savage to strangers, and brutal to each other. Is this, Mr. Philosopher, the boasted state of nature, which you wish to see restored ?

IN a journey which I have made, since I have been in your country, to explore the shores of the great lakes, and to view

the falls of *Niagara*, I have had some opportunities of seeing the savage nations of this continent. From books I have learnt those particulars, which my own observation did not supply; and what a picture do I contemplate! In the winter they shiver round a wigwam fire, the cold wind whistling through the frequent openings, and the snow burying them, as they lie wrapped in their furs.

IN the summer they bask in the sun, till hunger drives them to the chase. Then gorged with flesh, and surfeited with blood, they sleep again, till hunger sends them anew to the mountains and deserts.

THEIR women are made beasts of burden and slaves of brutal pleasures; while their haughty masters deny them, even the possibility of partaking upon equal terms in the joys of that sensual paradise, which they anticipate beyond the grave.

WAR is the great ruling passion, which calls into action all the energies of the American savage. Intrepid, ferocious and

invincible in combat, he never leaves the field without victory. The battle commonly proves fatal to the greater number of both sides, and to the whole of the vanquished party. Few are taken prisoners; and those who are, receive a fate infinitely worse, than immediate death.

PERHAPS a solitary prisoner, or two, whom the caprice or pity of their masters reserves for the service of the wigwag, escape the torture. But he, who is doomed to honor the GOD OF WAR, is first naked to a stake, A slow fire is kindled around him, which scorches without consuming. The flesh is lacerated; burning coals are thrown into the open wounds; the sinews are rent asunder, and the flesh torn off, broiled and devoured, before the indignant warrior. At length, when his sufferings are almost past endurance, he is loosed from the stake, that he may recover his spirits a little, and afford his tormentors a further diversion. His heart remains unsubdued, till death, his best friend, releases the soul from its mangled habitation.

THIS, Mr. Philosopher, is but a faint outline of that glorious state of nature, to which you would bring back the human race. Should I fill up the picture, it would grow blacker and blacker, till not an agreeable shade would be left to cheer the eye.

“BUT (replied the Philosopher) will you make no account of the racks and the gibbets, the pillories, the prisons and the whipping-posts of civil society? Will you not notice the tyranny of priests, who would blind our eyes, that they may fitch our purses, and put hooks in our noses?

“COURTS of justice, laws and magistrates, encroaching on our natural liberty, compel us to pay our debts, to curb our passions, and respect the CREATED rights of our neighbors. I am tired of these eternal restraints. I sigh for the liberty of doing, what I please, the glorious liberty of nature.

“BUT the ÆRA is now dawning in America, when civil government shall

either be completely abolished, or so softened and accommodated to the primeval innocence of man, as to be no longer a burden. Religion, that tool of statesmen, and idol of fools, with its ministers, its temples, and its votaries, shall be swept into oblivion.

“MARRIAGE shall be abolished, and a community of women, of property and rights, shall crown the triumph of philosophy, and of republicanism.”

A STORM, which had been rising in the west, now began to pour down floods of rain; and we parted, with a mutual promise of meeting again.



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